WHAT IS GOD?

BY

SOLOMON COHEN

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SOLOMON COHEN

PREFACE

In the year 1910 I published my first book entitled "Homespun Philosophy" which to my great surprise and delight was well received by many thoughtful men. I think it best to reproduce here the Preface of that book with some additional explanatory remarks.

With mingled feelings of humility and pride I present this little book to the reading public. I am well aware of its many faults and imperfections, and am fully conscious of my lack of a higher education and philosophic training, in consequence of which I am unable to express my thoughts with clearness and precision.

Yet I take a pardonable pride in the fact that despite the drawbacks of a meagre education, and notwithstanding the strenuous work I had to do in building up a large business, I have not allowed my mind to become absorbed entirely in business matters, but have devoted some of my time to think and meditate upon the higher problems of life.

I never went much to school, and have but little taste for books and study. By way of compensation Nature has given me a retentive memory, so that anything I happen to read or hear, sticks in

my mind. I am also possessed of a considerable power of imagination, which manifested itself in early life. In my boyhood fancies, I would often ride on the wind and fly through the air without the aid of any airship.

When I passed the age of youth and entered middle life, I felt my mental powers increasing, and thoughts on different philosophical subjects flowed, so to speak, into my mind.

I cannot explain how I came by my thoughts, and probably there will be not a few who will be astonished at the almost miraculous fact of a plain and uneducated man, like myself, being inspired to thoughts relating to the deepest and highest problems of human existence.

As the title "Homespun Philosophy" indicates, my thoughts are not the products of high culture and great learning, but are rather rough and unpolished, being born amidst the din and noise of a busy manufacturing place. But while scholarly and scientific men arrive at their conclusions by an elaborate process of reasoning, it was given to me to discern the truth by intuition, and to have my views on some points, as for instance the existence of a Divine Providence, confirmed by the actual experience in my own life.

I venture to cherish the hope that the reader may find in these pages some thoughts at least which will prove to be a help and a stimulus to high thinking and noble living.

This was my Preface to my "Homespun Philosophy."

I desire now to make a statement which was inadvertently omitted in the above Preface. It is this: Both my "Homespun Philosophy" and this present book were written by me in Yiddish, the language most familiar to me. The translation into the English was made by a friend of mine to whom I am glad to express hereby my sincerest thanks for his painstaking labors.

As for the view of God presented in the following pages, to some people it will doubtless appear as being too radical and too far in advance of the current thought, while others again will think that I am still under the influence of the old and decrepit religious views. All I can say is that I have presented my views without fear or favor. I am a seeker after truth and if anybody will point out wherein I have erred I shall glady listen to him. It is difficult to speak on the subject of God, so abounding in awe and mystery, with positive assurance. But it is possible for every think-

ing man to get a glimpse at least of the divine light and truth. It is my sincerest hope that this book may be of some help, however little, to dissipate the clouds of fanaticism and superstition and to vindicate the right of man to independence and freedom of thought.

The Author

New York, May 1917

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"The people that walk in darkness
Have seen a great light."

ISAIAH, Chapter IX.

Chap. I.

BELIEF IN GOD IS NECESSARY.

The only reason why I believe in God is—reason. I have no other reasons. Religious sentiments, social environments, or mercenary motives, had absolutely no influence whatever in shaping my belief in God. Many years of free and unhampered thinking on the subject of God have ripened in me the conviction that belief in God is necessary to the thinking mind. I have searched after God and found him, not in the Bible, not in the starry heavens, and in the ever-rolling seas, not in the green fields and forests, but within myself.

No man has ever seen God and yet we know that God is, though we know not what God is. We know that the North Pole exists although Peary is the only man who has ever seen it. We know that electricity exists although even Edison has never seen it. We know that God is, although no living man has ever seen him. I say no living man, for

there are plenty of dead men who have claimed or for whom it is claimed that they have seen God face to face and have spoken to him as one man speaks to another. Our knowledge of God, however, is not susceptible of such undeniable proofs as is the existence of the North Pole or of electricity. It therefore cannot be called knowledge in the strict sense of the word, but must be satisfied to be termed a belief, a strong, convincing and unshakable belief, yet still a belief.

The belief in God inculcated into our minds when we were still children is somewhat shaken in the "storm and stress" period of life, but grows stronger and stronger as we grow older and think more deeply of man and the world he lives in. When the child hearing the thunder and seeing the lightning asks in astonishment, "Who does it?", he is told, as were the children of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai, that it is God. When his wondering eyes turn to the star-lit heavens and he asks for the name of the owner of such a beautiful place, he is told that his name is God. To the unthinking man the answer received in his childhood is quite satisfactory and he bothers himself no more about it. But the thinking man is driven to find out for himself how the questions which puzzled his budding intellect can best be answered

in the light of maturer thought. All the answers, however, which the thinking mind can give to the question "Who created the Universe?" lead back to God, and the most profound philosopher is bound to go back to his childhood days and repeat what his unphilosophizing mother told him when he bothered her with his childish questions as to who causes the roars of thunder and the flashes of lightning.

But here it might well be asked, What use is there in all philosophy about God if we get no better results? Why devote so much time and thought to solve a problem which has baffled all philosophers and seems to be without a solution? To this I have a double reply. In the first place, the man who is born with the instinct of philosophizing will philosophize without regard to consequences or results. He follows the bend of his nature, as the captive squirrel hides away nuts for the winter. To be engaged in finding the truth is both his pleasure and his reward. The great Lessing has well said: "If God, holding in one hand complete truth, and searching after truth in the other, were to say to me, 'Man, choose!' I should beseechingly say to God: "give me the searching after truth, for the whole truth is only for thee."

In the second place, there is after all an immense difference between the God believed in by a child and the God believed in by the thinker. The child's idea of God is that of a big, powerful being who does as he pleases. "He maketh poor and maketh rich, he killeth and maketh alive." He is an absolute ruler of the Universe; while the thinker's God rules more like a monarch limited by a constitution. The child's God has the heavens for his throne and the earth for his footstool, the thinker's God is the "All-in-All."

There are some people, however, who object to all philosophy about God on the ground that it does a great deal of harm by weakening the faith in God. They claim that we must believe without asking any questions. But the man who is afraid of examining his faith shows by that very fear that he has some doubts himself and is not quite sure that his faith will stand the acid test of reason. In bygone times every one who dared express a doubt about the truth of the current belief exposed himself to severe punishment and relentless persecution. Happily we have reached a stage of civilization when blind religious fanaticism is powerless to suppress philosophical inquiry and to put out the light of reason by brute force. When recently the papers reported the case of a man who was

arrested in the State of Connecticut for blasphemy, everybody seemed to be surprised that there was still such a law on the statute books of a modern State, but nobody had any fear that that man will share the fate of Socrates, Jesus and thousands of others who forfeited their lives because they dared to doubt the truth of the current religion. The old idea of God to whom the blood of sacrifices is a "sweet savor" still survives in the brains of some people, but fortunately those people are in possession of some other ideas of culture and civilization which counterbalance their crude idea of God and put a damper on their zeal for burning heretics. Such fanatics are happily decreasing in numbers and will soon pass away altogether, because humanity has reached the age of thought, and thought is the most powerful weapon against religious and political tyrants and oppressors. That is the reason why fanatics hate it and try to suppress it. But thought can never be stopped. One might just as well try to stop the swelling up of a spring, or the bursting forth of flowers when kissed by the sunshine. The body may be chained and fettered, but there are no prison bars strong enough to confine thought. To thought may be applied what the prophet Isaiah said of Israel, the nation of thinkers: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. (Isa. 54:17).

The thinking man then clings to the idea of God, although he must abandon the absurd notions of God which have come down to us from the childhood of humanity. Reason compels us to believe that God is, but leaves us helpless when we try to define God. When a great philosopher was asked to give a definition of God he replied: "If I could define God I would be God myself. It takes a God to define God." And yet, we may sometimes define a thing by pointing out what it is not. Accordingly, many religious thinkers and philosophers in the past have endeavored to describe God in a negative way by enumerating the qualities which he does not possess, as for instance, that he is not created, that he does not change, that he is not limited by time and space. Generally the God of the philosophers bears as little resemblance to a man as possible, while the God of the unthinking multitude was made out to be very much alike to a man, only that he was a man of gigantic proportions. The Greek and Roman gods were only enlarged copies of Greek and Roman men and women. Even in this enlightened age the average religious man or woman thinks of God as a powerful being who, like a big policeman, watches over the life and property of the people and arrests the

transgressors of the law. Fear is the basis if not the origin of all religions. There are some people who think that if you take away the fear of God there would be chaos in society, as the restraint of human passions for lust and murder would be gone. I believe this is a mistaken notion. Most of the criminals in prison are persons who have been brought up in the fear of God, and there are plenty of bad men and women out of prisons who profess to fear God and even love God, probably because they think that he is kind to them by keeping them out of prison. In looking over the past history of man one cannot but conclude that the inhuman and cruel deeds perpetrated in the name and for "the glory of God" far outnumber the good deeds prompted by belief in God. When I therefore say that belief in God is necessary I do not mean to say that it is necessary for the maintenance of civilized society, but what I mean is that it is a necessary conclusion of the thinking mind.

Free and independent thought does not rob a person of his God. On the contrary, it gives him a nobler and more rational idea of God. There is in the Talmud a very interesting story of a Roman governor who once said to Rabbi Gamaliel that in reading the opening chapters of the Bible he found

that God was a thief, since he stole a rib from Adam. The Rabbi's daughter overheard this and asked her father's permission to answer the question. He gave his consent. The girl stepped forward, and feigning to be in distress, she lifted her arms and cried out: "My Lord, I want your help, I want justice to be done." "What has happened," asked the governor. "Last night," she answered, "a burglar entered our house and carried off our silver candlesticks, but he left behind him a golden candlestick." "What a generous thief that must have been," replied the governor, "I wish such a thief would visit my house." "Well," exclaimed the Rabbi's daughter, "that's the kind of thief God is. He stole a rib from Adam and left a beautiful wife in its place." So it is with reason. It takes away from us the old idea of a "great, powerful, and terrible God" who is "jealous and vindictive," but it does not leave us without a God in the world. On the contrary, it enlarges our vision of God and brings us into closer communion with the Supreme Power of the Universe.

But while reason leads us to believe in God it does not help us in our efforts to find a definition of God. Says Emerson: "When we attempt to define and describe God, both language and thought

desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages."

And yet, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my heart after thee, O God." All of us know what it means to be thirsty, although only a scholarly man would be able to give an exact definition of thirst. A thirsty man is not in need of a dictionary to tell him what thirst is. Nor can his feeling of thirst be removed by having somebody else drink for him. The hunger and thirst for the knowledge of God cannot be satisfied by having somebody else think for us. We must do our own thinking, and we must in our thinking be fearless and ready to accept the conclusions of reason even if they clash with long-cherished opinions and beliefs.

Chap. II.

THE ETERNAL GOD.

The Hebrew word for God, Jehovah, expresses the idea of eternity. "He is, was, and will be," or, as the Psalmist expresses it in poetical form, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psalm 90). There is a noticeable thing about the attribute of God's eternity. All other attributes which we ascribe to God are such as mortal beings possess in a smaller degree. For instance, when we say God is all-good, all-wise, all-powerful, we ascribe to God qualities with which we mortal men are also endowed. Goodness, wisdom, and power, are qualities that human beings are possessed of in a smaller or higher degree. Not so with eternity. There are no degrees in eternity. A thing is either eternal or not eternal. Therefore when we say God is eternal we ascribe to God a quality which we are lacking altogether. And this fact alone is suffi-

cient cause in my humble opinion to throw doubt on the orthodox view of the eternity of God. For it may well be asked: Why has God kept the great boon of eternity all to himself, and doomed all his creatures to decay and death? Where is the goodness of God in decreeing that we all must die? The answer given in the story of the Garden of Eden is not likely to satisfy an inquiring mind.

But apart from this objection to the belief in the eternity of God, it seems to me that the whole idea of eternity is illogical. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as eternity. Everything in Nature changes and assumes other forms. In the world around us we see nothing but constant change. The sea that rolls its mighty waves before our eyes today is not the same sea we have looked at yesterday. The "eternal hills" are not the same that they were a thousand years ago. And we ourselves are constantly changing not only physically but also mentally. Change is indispensable to life. Suppose a man should build a palace and fill it with the finest things to eat and drink. If he locks the doors and windows and excludes the fresh air, all his fine provisions would decay and he would miserably perish. And why? Because the change of air was stopped and without such a change life must stop, too. Even death is nothing

but a change of life. For in reality there is no death. In the words of the poet: "There is no death; what seems so is transition." What we call decay and corruption is only another phase of life. Nature does not recognize the distinction between clean and unclean, pure and impure. If things that become rotten would continue in their rottenness, we would have to move about rotten things; the air would be pestiferous, and life would be unbearable. But wise Nature has saved us from such a fate. She knows how to make corrupt things uncorrupted, and how to make unclean things clean. Thus there is a constant change going on. Beauty turns into ugliness and ugliness into beauty again. The most beautiful man or woman is changed into a heap of dirt, and the finest flower withers and is thrown into the ash-barrel; but out of the corruption there comes incorruption.

The wise preacher said: "One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever." (Ecclesiastes 1:4). He probably meant by "the earth" not the planet on which we live, but mankind. It is mankind which lives on forever. Grandparents, parents, and children are only names for different divisions of mankind, just as yesterday, today and tomorrow are names for the divisions of time. Mankind is eternal, and like

time, it is without beginning and without end. And not only mankind as a whole, but also the unit of humanity is eternal. The former generations live in the present generation, and the present will live in the generation to come. There is no fundamental change, only a change in the names. The grandparents were once parents and the parents will be grandparents. As the rain comes down from heaven and returns again to heaven, so there is a continual process of change going on in life of Nature and man, and not a drop of water is entirely lost.

But why is it that we have such an instinctive fear of death? Why is it that very often the fear of death takes all the joy out of life and turns some people into mourners for their own death? It seems as if Nature designed death as a scarecrow for the living. You remember how a farmer takes a few stout sticks, dresses them up like a man, and sets the imitation man up in his garden to scare away the obnoxious birds that prey upon the fruits of the garden. As birds are foolishly afraid of the scarecrow, so men are foolishly filled with the fear of death, Nature's scarecrow, designed to protect the fruits of life from the degradation of fierce passions, and also to induce people to make the present life richer and more fruitful.

In reality, however, there is no death. There is only a continued change in the forms and appearances of life. And this continual change takes place not only in physical things but also in intellectual and spiritual matters. Just as an old man would hardly recognize himself in a picture taken when he was a child, because of the great change in his facial features, so he would never recognize the features of his own mind in his boyhood days. The changes which our minds undergo are especially noticeable in regard to religious beliefs. What we believe at the age of ten we no longer believe at the age of twenty, and beliefs we cherish at the age of twenty we are likely to discard at the age of forty. Some of the greatest thinkers of the world have changed the opinions which they had entertained in their earlier life. If a man says that he never changes his mind you may set him down as a man who has nothing in his mind to change. A man who never changes his mind is intellectually just on as low a level as the man who never changes his shirt. A wider outlook on the world expands the mind, and expansion implies change. Can any grown-up person believe that Santa Claus comes down the chimney and fills the children's stockings with presents? And yet, some fanatics claim that we must believe in all the

stories of the Bible which were told us when we were young, and which originated when mankind was still in its infancy. The mind of man outgrows the beliefs cherished in childhood days, and rises day by day to higher and deeper conceptions of man and the world.

There are, to be sure, men of great intellect and keen reasoning powers who profess a belief in a personal God who is the creator and governor of the universe. But this should not deter us from examining the truth for ourselves. For, in the first place, against their opinion we have the opinion of men of equally great intellects who deny the existence of a personal God. Recently the newspapers stated that "Professor Leuba, a well known psychologist of Bryn Mawr College, has ascertained by a canvass of 5,500 American scientists that the greater part of them deny both a personal God and the immortality of the human soul."

Moreover, just as a "little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men" so there is also in the brain of the wisest man some spot which is dark and unilluminated by the divine fire. However deep and penetrating human reason may be, it has its limitations. It seems as if Nature did not want any one man to know too much and to learn her secrets. The power of thinking

is itself the greatest mystery which the thinker himself is unable to explain. Why did the thought of a new continent strike Columbus and not the thousands of other sea captains? How does Edison discover things hidden to others? And why does it take him sometimes years before he succeeds in persuading Nature to tell him one of her secrets? Why does Nature require so much coaxing? When we hear or read of a great truth we cannot help feeling a little chagrined that we did not think of that great truth ourselves, so plain and simple it appears after somebody has revealed it. But Nature seems to hate all monopolies. She does not want one man to be knowing too much. And so she scatters her gifts, and gives to this man a few thoughts and to the other man a few others. To each she gives a fragment of knowledge. Only by skillful putting together of these fragments the whole truth will be known.

The time is not far distant when man will ascribe eternity not to God only, but also to man and Nature, when it will be generally recognized that the continual change in the world around us is only a change of outward forms and appearances, while in reality man and Nature are eternal and are "the same yesterday, today and forever."

Chap. III.

GOD AND THE WORLD.

The old method of Jewish education was to begin with the beginning, that is, to start with the first book of Moses which begins: "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth." If, as it sometimes happened, the boy was of an inquiring mind and would ask the teacher "and who created God?" what do you suppose the teacher would do? Would he try to reason with the child? Not at all. He would get indignant, box the boy's ears and tell him that one must not ask such questions. Why does the teacher use such a striking—but unconvincing argument? Why not tell the boy that God was not created by anybody but is a self-created being. Probably the teacher was afraid that the answer might raise in the boy's mind another question, namely, if there is one being that is self-created then there might be another such self-created being and maybe the world, like God, was not created at all but existed from

all eternity. In order to avoid such dangerous questions the teacher prefers to box the boy's ears and let it go at that. Unfortunately for the progress of humanity, most of the boys are cowed by the teacher's answer and never again dare question anything that is in the Bible, and so the idea of a God who created the world and is also able to destroy it at any time is firmly implanted in the minds of the rising generation and sticks there throughout their lives. Such "a great, powerful and terrible God" is well able to inspire men with fear and terror and to make them obey, for disobedience might rouse his wrath and cause him to destroy the world as it happened in the times of Noah, and with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. My early idea of God was of this character. I was afraid to do anything wrong lest God should punish me. I feared God, but I can hardly say that I ever loved him. An object of fear can never be at the same time an object of love. I do not think that my children could really love me if they would fear me. All they might do is to show me the outward signs of love for the sake of pleasing me, but the real feeling of love would be lacking. Love is something that cannot be enforced by commandments and threats.

In trying to escape from the difficulty of be-

lieving that God created the world out of nothing many thinkers fall into another difficulty. They are like a man walking through a field of thistles who while he disentangles himself on one side gets entangled on the other side. For the belief in creation out of nothing they substitute the theory that the world is self-created, which theory is just as hard to reconcile with common sense as the belief in creation out of nothing. Those who believe that God created the world have at least some rational basis for their view. For God is admitted by all to be eternal and as God is possessed of an inherent mysterious power the creation cannot be said to be out of nothing. It was caused by that mysterious power. But that the world created itself is something hard to comprehend. For in the first place they never tell at what time the world created itself and why it was at one time rather than another. In the second place, if they think that something can come out of nothing let them demonstrate it. Let them try to build a house without materials, and if they succeed, I will gladly accept their view. Furthermore, if God created the world out of nothing or the world is self-created, why is it that Nature is so careful about all things and does not allow the least thing to be lost? Nature would not have been so miserly if

she were a creature of a generous God or if she had been her own creator.

The source of the current belief in the creation of the world by God is the Bible. It is therefore worthy of note that the Bible contradicts itself on this point as it contains evidence to show that God did not create the world. The Bible tells us that when God was about to destroy the world by a deluge, Noah was told to build an ark and to take into the ark a pair of every animal "to keep seed alive upon the face of the whole earth." Now why had Noah to go to the trouble of having such an immense circus in his ark? Would it not have been much more convenient for God just to say one word and have all the animals created anew, just as they were supposed to have been created in the beginning?

One reason why some philosophers of today who are not believers in the Bible advance the theory that the world was created, may be found in the desire to be original, to say something that has the charm of novelty even if it is not in accordance with the truth. Some people find it much easier to indulge in fanciful speculations than to inquire diligently into the facts. It is also noteworthy that blind belief or what is called superstition is not only to be found among the unedu-

cated and unthinking but also among the educated and cultured class. Thinking people will also sometimes blindly follow the leaders and accept their views without examining them. A false theory occasionally finds enthusiastic adherents who will fight for it and defend it with all their might. Such is the case with the false theory of the creation of the world by God or by itself. I am free to confess that I do not believe either that God created the world or that the world created itself. My belief is that the world was not created at all, but existed from the beginning of time. But it was not exactly the same world that we see today, for, as mentioned before, there is a constant change going on, one world is destroyed and another takes its place, one world dies and another is born.

I consider it therefore also futile to try to trace the beginning of human life. We can never succeed in this effort, because no matter how far back we may go we cannot go beyond the point where the first human life appeared, and this first human life must also have descended from preceding life. Life comes only from life, and without previous life there can be no life. The old question as to which was first, the hen or the egg will never be solved. But we may safely say that

just as the apple tree grows from the seed of the apple, and the various animals are produced by their respective kinds, so did man descend from man. But who the first man was is a matter that will never be ascertained with any measure of accuracy. I think it therefore best to make up our minds to consider the question as to the origin of human life as being impossible of an answer.

The relation of the world to God is that of a drop of water to the ocean. The ocean is composed of innumerable drops of water. You cannot take up a single drop and call it the ocean, nor can you say that this drop is not a part of the ocean. Likewise every grain of sand in the desert of Sahara is a part of the great desert. And so it is with God. Everything we see about us is part of God, "the whole earth is full of his glory," and God and the world are one and the same, inseparable and indivisible.

Chap. IV.

THE RELATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

That God created man is a matter of faith, that man created gods is a matter of history. How keen is the satire of the great Hebrew prophet when he describes the idolater who after cutting down a tree "He burneth the half thereof in the fire; with half thereof he roasteth flesh; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image." (Isaiah 44). Idolatry is still practised by the majority of the people living in Asia and Africa and has not vanished altogether from the parts of the world where modern civilization prevails. But even where idolatry in the liberal sense is no longer known, its spirit of dark superstition still survives to the present day and moves people to run after all kinds of superstitious beliefs and practices. In our modern cities the fortune tellers are still doing a thriving business, and a Metropolitan newspaper publishes every day "Raphael's Astrological Predictions."

Fortunately, however, men like Terah who according to tradition cast his son Abraham into a fiery furnace because he refused to worship the idols have died out, and Abrahams' spirit of devotion to and sacrifice for the truth is abroad in the land. The men and women of today are seeking light and enlightment and have abandoned their allegiance to blind faith. They do not feel in duty bound to believe a thing simply because their fathers and forefathers believed in it. They want to know first of all whether the thing is true or not, and if they find the thing to be unreasonable they rebel just as did Abraham of old.

The question, "What relation is there between God and man?" is one of the hardest and most complicated questions which confront the earnest thinker. I do not think that the human mind will ever be able to answer this question in an entirely satisfactory way. But we may at least make an earnest effort to solve it. We have been endowed with reason that we may use it in all matters. Only blind fanatics refuse to use their reason in matters of faith and instead of trying to get all possible light on this momentous question they prefer to walk in darkness, and their leaders, instead of pointing to the right way of solving it, put obstacles in the way and mislead the seeker after light and truth.

Those who are not willing to walk in darkness, and refuse either to believe or to disbelieve blindly, would do well in approaching this question to take due consideration of two things: The Outward Nature and the Inner Self.

In Nature we find two forces opposing each other; goodness and badness, wisdom and folly, truth and falsehood, life and death, happiness and unhappiness. When the poet sings of the beauty of Nature he looks only at one side of her, for Nature has also a reverse side which is far from being beautiful. We find in Nature ugly animals, poisonous serpents, and insects, which threaten life and mar its beauty. Besides, all life is an ugly struggle for existence from which men seek relief in foolish and vain things. Folly seems to be the spice of life. A fool makes us laugh and we enjoy his foolery. The same holds good of falsehood. Without falsehood life would be intolerable. People often say that they love the truth, but in so saying they are not telling the truth, for truth cannot get along in the world. Truth is opposed to all make-believe, and without make-believe, social life is almost impossible. Do we really love to hear the truth spoken? Suppose a young man has his lungs examined by a doctor, does he like to be

told that he is suffering with consumption? Or does one who is diseased like to hear from the doctors lips' that his disease is incurable? Or does a man who fairly worships his wife like to hear that she has deceived him and that the children which he loves with all his heart are not his own? If people should suddenly decide to tell only for one day the truth, what an upheaval this would cause! What tragic results it would bring forth! Friends of long standing would become bitter enemies, highly respectable households would be broken up, and social life would be shaken to its very foundation. It is therefore owing to falsehood that we are able to carry on social life. Truth makes people unhappy, and therefore they hate and shun it. Small wonder that there are so many false people in the world. The world compels people to deceive each other.

And just as there are in Nature two powers, so there are in the Deity. There is nothing supernatural. All the miracles which men consider as being supernatural are in accord with Nature. If we think them to be supernatural, it is because we don't know Nature well enough. It is a mistake to suppose that God is goodness only, or wisdom only, or truth only. God is all things even, as the prophet Isaiah declared: "I form the light,

and create the darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things." (Isa. 45:7)

There is no absolute good or absolute evil in the world. The refreshing rain comes from the dark clouds, and when the clouds gather sunshine disappears. The seed of wheat must be buried and decay before it brings forth the waving stalks of grain. The more we learn of Nature the less we are liable to follow superstitious beliefs and practices.

The second requirement for obtaining a proper answer to the question at hand is the knowledge of one's own self. If a man searches his own heart and tries to find out the longings and aspirations of his own soul he will understand and feel his near kinship with God. Every man is himself a world on a small scale. As the artist is able to enlarge a small photograph to a considerable size, so man may get a large picture of the world by imagining himself to be enlarged a billion-fold. But man is generally unconscious of his exalted position. He runs after false gods, and remains blind to his own great importance and divine dignity. In short, he does not understand that he himself is a part of the divine, that God dwells in him as much as he does in the great world which

is only an enlarged copy of the smaller world called man. He forgets that his own intellect differs from that of God only in a quantity but not in quality. To give an illustration: a drop of water taken from the ocean has in it all the qualities of the ocean, though it is no longer a constituent part of the ocean.

The man who is always looking for God outside of himself reminds one of a story told of an absent-minded German professor, who having much difficulty to remember in the morning where he had put his various articles of apparel before retiring, decided to write down on a piece of paper the exact places where he put them. Accordingly, he jotted down: "Hat is on the table, coat on the chair, vest ditto, shoes under the sofa, trousers on the bureau, Professor Schmidt in bed." On arising the next morning he found everything as he had written it down, but was surprised not to find Professor Schmidt in his bed.

The fact that God is to be found within our own breast makes the union between God and man permanent and indissoluble. Man can as little separate himself from God as he can separate himself from himself. This idea of the inseparability of man from God is pratically expressed by the Psalmist when he says: "Whither shall I go from thy

spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall seize hold of me." (Psalm 139)

The indwelling of God in man makes man the greatest wonder in the universe. There is nothing more wonderful in the world than man. To give only one illustration: Let us imagine that one who has travelled a great deal would have taken a photograph of all the scenery and all the people he has seen, the album thus made would require tons of paper and would occupy a spacious library. But there are thousands and thousands of pictures taken without any photographic outfit, and stored away in a small corner of the head, and by a mere act of the will the pictures are rolled up before your mind and you can see again the scenes and persons you have seen years and years ago. Wonder of wonders! A few words spoken to you twenty-five or fifty years ago are so deeply imbedded in your brain that you can recall them with perfect vividness and clearness. Is not this alone sufficient proof that there is in man a part of the divine power, a spark of the divine fire? When

Moses saw the bush burning and yet not being consumed he felt that God was there. So when we see a thought, a word, a visual or audible impression made on our brain years ago and not being obliterated, we must feel that we ourselves are holy ground where God dwells continually.

But, alas for our gross ignorance of our own divinity! It is this ignorance which is at the bottom of all idolatry, of all racial and national hatreds, of all the bloody wars. This ignorance keeps people from seeing the true light and from hearing the true voice of reason; it keeps men in darkness and superstition, and prevents them from walking in the bright paths of sunshine and happiness.

Chap. V.

WHO GOVERNS THE WORLD?

In this free country the governor is chosen by the people. Is the governor of the world the free choice of the people? We poor mortals have no voice either in the making or in the execution of the laws of Nature. We are governed by an invisible government which is generally spoken of as the Supreme Power. The existence of a Supreme Power is acknowledged even by men of the most radical type. When we try to get at the meaning of this Supreme Power, we find that it is not very much different from a personal God, who does as he pleases.

If he wants to let it rain, it rains, if he wants the sun to shine, he shines. But if he does not want the sun to shine or the rain to fall, it is dark and there is a drought. But this is in my opinion a mistaken view. There is no God or Supreme Being who can do as he pleases and overturn the laws of Nature. I believe that Nature

consists of secret forces which are both rulers and ruled, that is, they govern and are governed. Each force exercises authority over the other forces and at the same time it obeys the command of those other forces. But if you are trying to think of one force only, you fail because Nature has no beginning and no end, and a thing that has neither beginning nor end cannot be represented in thought as one.

Nature is like a chain made up of many links of forces each of which link influences the other links and is influenced by them. Now suppose each link thinking that there is one Supreme Link which has more power than the others should try to find that Supreme Link, would that not be a futile effort? Something like this is indicated in the phrase: "His servants ask each other: Where is the place of his glory?" But their question will never be answered, because there is in Nature no Supreme Lord, all her forces are both rulers and servants at the same time. Sometimes man is inclined to think himself the lord and master of Nature. But he is not. In fact, there exists in Nature no absolute lord and master. The tyrant who makes all his subjects to tremble before him lives in constant fear of assassination, and his meanest slave enjoys a sounder and more undis-

turbed sleep. The same is true of man who considers himself to have dominion over the animals. It sometimes happens that his rule is cut short by the sting of a poisonous fly. There is not a single ruler in all nature who is not at the same time a subject of and a servant to others. All Nature consists of individual small forces which rule independently without having a higher ruler set over them.

The world's government resembles in my opinion the government of the United States, except that it is free from political graft. Our President is one of the people elected by the people themselves. The judges are also elected by the people, and so are the law-makers. And if any of the law-makers breaks the law he is sure to be punished by the executors of the law. And just as in our government the holder of an office generally adapts himself to the requirement of the office, so is the fate of every man adapted to his nature. Moreover, we may say that the fate of every man is in every man's own hand. There may be some exceptions, but the rule holds good that most people suffer as a consequence of their own inherited natures. The thief suffers because one of his parents or grandparents was a thief and transmitted to him a thieving nature. And our children may

also suffer for the sins we have committed. But divine Providence works in such complicated and confusing manner that we are unable to get at the bottom of things. The wind works in a strange manner, coming of a sudden and just as suddenly disappearing. And yet, who will maintain that the wind is its own master and an entirely independent agent? There is no doubt some cause and purpose in its blowing hard and in its slackening down. The same is true of human sufferings.

But the greatest sufferings that come upon man are those inflicted by his fellowmen. Unfortuneately men hate each other and often call each other names like "mean brute," forgetting that such names reflect upon themselves. It cannot be denied, though, that there are some people who behave worse than brutes.

There are, however, some actions by which men make the life of their fellows miserable, but which have nevertheless a good influence on the development of the higher social life. There is nothing in Nature wholly bad, and there is some good concealed in the worst things. It would be easy to prove this to be true of almost all the wrong actions of men against their neighbors, but two or three illustrations will suffice.

Who of us does not know how much it hurts to

be laughed at? We are all very sensitive to ridicule, and a man would rather have people weep over him than laugh at him. It is therefore wrong on our part to injure the feelings of our fellowmen by ridiculing him. And yet, ridicule is not altogether bad. It deters people from doing foolish things and losing the respect of their neighbors. The fear of being ridiculed has a wholesome effect on some people, and keeps them in the right path.

The same is true of suspicion. How many lives have been wrecked by the habit of some people to suspect their neighbors of wrongdoing! Many innocent people are made to suffer imprisonment and incur even the loss of life through being suspected. And yet it would not be good for society if there were no suspicion at all. Many a crime would remain undetected and unpunished if we had overconfidence in our neighbors and would never suspect them of wrongdoing. Suspicion often gives the right clue to the detection of crime and has therefore also its good side.

And now I come to the most common weakness of human nature, namely, selfishness which refuses to help a fellowman in distress. We often see a man who will deny aid to his own brother. But in this selfish behavior man only imitates Nature, which is parsimonious and miserly to an extreme

degree. Nature has supplied us freely with the necessary air, light and water. If she had been more generous she would have supplied us also with food without compelling us to earn our bread with "the sweat of our brow." But Nature had a good reason for being stingy. She was solicitous of man's welfare which would be endangered without work. Idleness makes people unhappy and dangerous to society. Now let us suppose the case of a rich man who owning a large farm which he bought with money earned during long years of hard work. If his poor brother asks to be supported by him, one would expect that he could not refuse such a request. But Nature has provided the rich brother with a goodly amount of selfishness so that he does refuse him and makes the poor brother work for a living, which in the end is far better for him than to live on the charity of his brother.

And just as in our form of government the execution of the laws is not in the hands of the law-making body, so it is also in Nature. One force delegates another force to execute its laws. And if the child is punished, it does not know why it is punished, but it is the penalty paid for his father's transgressions. And where such a form of government exists, it is impossible to know the exact

cause of punishment, just as the prisoner cannot argue with the prison guard about his guilt or innocence. The prison guard has nothing to do with the cause of his imprisonment. His only business is to see that the prisoner does not escape from the sentence imposed by the judge.

But, I might be asked, why should a criminal be punished at all? Is he to blame for having been born with a criminal tendency? If the fathers have eaten sour grapes should the teeth of the children be set on edge? My reply to this is that crime must be punished no matter what its origin is. When a man takes poison the law of Nature takes its full course whether he takes the poison by accident or with suicidal intent. We may have pity for the man who has inherited criminal tendencies, but we cannot let him escape from the results of his bad inheritance. I may point out, however, that in this case, as in many other cases, Nature shows herself to be neither excessively kind nor extremely cruel. While religious teachers promise as a reward for good behavior eternal bliss and as punishment for bad behavior eternal tortures, Nature does not deprive the bad people of all hope, but gives them an opportunity of becoming good again. There is in every good man something bad, and in every bad man something good.

The good man therefore will sometimes transmit to his children the bad traits that is in him, while the bad man will transmit to his children the good traits that he possesses, and in this way he becomes rehabilitated through the good qualities his children show in their lives. Nature does not go to extremes, but preferring the middle road she sees to it that there should be no excess either in goodness or in badness.

The question: "Who governs the world," is after all not so difficult to answer as would be the question: "How should the world be governed." I have no doubt that this question would receive a thousand different answers. But as it is, we have no say in the matter of world government, and are forced to submit to it whether we like it or not. To quote an old Rabbinical saying:

"Perforce Thou wast formed, and perforce thou wast born, and thou livest perforce, and perforce thou wilt die, and perforce thou wilt in the future have to give account and reckoning before the Supreme King of Kings, blessed be he."

My answer to the question: "Who governs the world," may be summed up as follows:

We ourselves are the government of the world; we ourselves execute the eternal laws by punishing others, and others again act in accordance with

the law by punishing us. We ourselves are a part of the divine forces which govern the eternal world.

This view of the government of the world is not so cheerless as it appears at a first glance. True, it deprives us of the hope of having our destiny changed by prayer and supplication to God, but, on the other hand, it tends to make us resigned to our inevitable destiny, and to bear cheerfully any burden of life laid upon us by a mysterious force acting in accordance with fixed and unchangeable laws.

Chap. VI.

GOD AND NATURE

An old Talmudical legend may fitly introduce this chapter. When Abraham became convinced that his father's idols of gold and silver were unworthy of worship, so the legend runs, he went out to seek the true God whom he might worship. When he saw the sun rise in his majesty and splendor, he fell on his knees and worshipped all day. But when the sun declined and set, Abraham perceived that the sun could not be the supreme power of the universe, for his glory was of a transitory character. The same was the case with the moon and the countless stars. Then Abraham saw a forest on fire. The mighty oaks were consumed like stubbles of the field. Here is the great power of the universe, Abraham said to himself, and he worshipped the fire. But soon a great cloudburst came and extinguished the fire. Can it be that water is the superior power? If so, how does it come that the clouds will carry it wherever they

please? But perhaps the clouds are supreme? If so, how could the winds drive them hither and thither? Is the wind then the supreme power? Not at all, for man is able to resist it. And so Abraham concluded that God is not a God that can be perceived by the senses, but only the inward eye can behold him.

This legend teaches us that God has given to man the power of thinking, and the more man uses this gift, the more grateful he will feel towards the giver. As the reasoning power of the human race grows in volume and intensity, so does the inner conviction of the human race, that there is a God from whom all things come and in whom we live and move and have our being.

But while the belief in God is universal, there is some difference of opinion concerning the relation between God and nature. There are some people who think that God and nature are one and the same, and that there is nothing that can be said of nature that cannot be said of God, and vice versa. To my mind this is a wrong view, and I fully believe that God is not the same as nature, but is above nature. God is, as it were, the manager of nature and her various forces, and he uses nature to do his will and execute his commands.

We cannot imagine how God could govern the

world without the instrumentality of nature. To say that God could do without nature is equivalent to saying that Paderewski could be a great pianist even if he didn't use the piano, or, that a sea captain could be a great navigator without having a vessel at his service. It seems to be, then, clear that God and nature are not identical, but they stand in the same relation to each other, as does the artist to his instrument, or the engineer to his locomotive.

It is of great importance that we should have the right view in this matter, for this is not merely a theoretical question but there is also a practical side to it. Those who think that God and nature are the same are, of course, deprived of the faith in the providence of God. For if God is only nature, then there is little hope for a good and kind providence. What we know of nature is that it works constantly, according to firmly established rules, and like the goddess of justice, she holds the scales with blindfolded eyes.

Quite different, however, is our view of life when we recognize the great truth that God is not identical with nature, but over and above it. The recognition of this truth leads to the belief in God's providence and creates in our hearts a feeling of implicit trust and confidence.

I am firmly convinced that there is a divine providence and that the world is governed not by natural laws, but by the will of God. One or two illustrations will confirm my belief: Supposing you take two children born in the same hour and bring them up in a different way. The one baby is raised in accordance with the best approved scientific methods, and the other is neglected; the one grows stronger every day, and the other grows sickly and puny. And yet it may come to pass that the stronger baby dies off while the weak one lives to a ripe old age. Would this be in accordance with nature? Hardly. Such a case would only be explicable on the theory that it was divine providence that arranged things in opposition to the natural order.

Disbelievers in divine providence would probably retort by saying that it was mere chance which killed the stronger child, some germ of disease happening to find its way into the baby's system. It was nothing more than the result of chance which we can see every day in the failure of bright men and the success of stupid and brainless fellows. To this I reply: Speak not of chance! There is no such thing as chance in this world. I believe in a divine management of this world.

Take another instance: Many a beautiful and

lovely young girl remains single, or, when married gets a blackguard of a husband, while the homely and dull girl will often get the brightest and best of husbands. You will say it is destiny. But what is destiny? It is nothing but the divine arrangement made by Providence.

When a building collapses, and the people which were at the time in and near the building are killed we find it to be quite natural. But, what if some people escape from being killed, is that also natural? I would rather say it was by a miracle that these were saved. A divine providence did so guide the falling bricks in their downward march that the people were not hit by them.

I trust the reader will bear with me when I relate an incident in my own life which has impressed me with the unshakeable conviction that there is a providence guiding the affairs of life.

One day I was about to place a bottle of soda water in the ice-box used in my office. The ice-box was set up quite high so that when I removed the lid from the top my face was on a level with the box. Presently there was a terrific noise heard all over the shop. The bottle of soda water exploded and fine pieces of glass were sent flying in every direction. My face was hit by some of the fragments but I escaped unhurt. For days afterwards

I suffered from the terrible thought of what might have happened if any of the glass splinters had struck my eyes. To be blind is in some respects worse than to be dead. Now I am firmly convinced that it was an act of divine providence which so guided the flying particles of glass that my eyes were saved from destruction and my life was preserved for the sake of my family and for the sake of whatever good I might do to my fellowmen.

How blind are we, poor mortals not to see everywhere the footprints of a wise deity. Look not for God in the starry heavens above, or in the depths of the ocean, or in the bowels of the earth. No! You can see traces of Him right where you are! Consider how mother earth, spinning around the sun at a high speed, supports your feet and provides you with food and raiment! Think of the majestic sun sending forth his golden beams to give light and heat! And when this planet turns from the sun, and, as it were, veils its face, then millions of stars appear on the sky to tell of God's glory. Can you not hear what those twinkling stars are telling you? This is what they are saying: Thou puny little man, hast thou ever tried to count us? Canst thou tell our age? Dost thou know who has begotten us? Ah! Thou art silent and thine eyes sink to the ground in confusion and

shame! Thou wouldst rather fasten thy looks upon the ground, where thou thinkest to be the master and ruler. But in this thou art miserably mistaken, too. For even there thou art weak as a fly. In the midst of life's pleasures and enjoyment, even while thou art dancing and singing, thou art in danger of death and destruction. The tiniest earthquake might brush thee and thine aside as easily as the housewife brushes away a spider's web. And this weak fly boastingly assuming the title 'The Crown of Nature,' believes in himself but disbelieves in God!

There are some people who having lost their faith in God, take refuge in Nature. They ascribe to Nature all the attributes usually ascribed to God. They speak of "Kind Nature," "Wise Nature" and so forth. In my opinion Nature is neither kind nor wise. If Nature were kind she would not allow death breeding microbes to multiply so greatly; if she were wise she would have arranged things quite differently from what they are. Nature has no heart and cares little for human welfare. But man may learn from her good and valuable lessons, just as we may learn from our enemies the most efficient methods of success in life's struggles. As a matter of fact, the oldest and finest free public school in the world is that estab-

lished and maintained by—Mother Earth. This venerable teacher is up to date in her method of teaching by object lessons. The books used in her schools never went through the printing press, the letters being formed of stars and mountains, woods and streams. The only trouble in the schools of nature is the lack of discipline. There is no way of punishing inattentive or tardy pupils, and no truant officer looks out for children playing "hooky." I often wish there were some way of compelling every man, woman and child, living in the dark and dreary tenement houses of overpopulated cities, to attend our great mother's school at least for a few weeks during the year. We would then have manlier men and womanlier women, and social life would be more in harmony with the eternal laws of life which are written on the tiniest leaf as well as on the mighty forest, on the pebble as well as on the Rocky Mountains, on the drop of water as well as on the briny sea. City life builds up a Chinese wall between man and nature, and puts asunder what God has intended to be united.

To give an illustration of the kind of lessons taught in the school of nature I must ask the reader to transport himself in imagination to the side of a waterfall.

Look how the water plunges down the preci-

pice. One stream after another rushes down to be swallowed up by the seething mass of water below. While the eye delights in the beauty of the scene, the soul is seized with a feeling of mysterious awe. We feel that we stand in the presence of a great mysterious power which commands the streams of water to hurl themselves against the rock and they obey with alacrity, although it looks as if they were hurrying to be annihilated.

Now let us consider for a moment a few of the many thoughts suggested by the sight of a waterfall.

1. Each of us is like a stream of water. We jostle and push those that are in front of us, and are in turn jostled and pushed by those behind us. There is no lagging behind in life's journey, we must go forward and meet the destiny that awaits us.

2. We recall the words of the wise woman of Tekoa: "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (II Sam. 14:14). Miles and miles these millions of water-drops have traveled together in close companionship, until they have reached this place to be suddenly and without warning torn apart and separated forever.

Here is a young couple walking together in

the love-lit path of life. Their souls are bound up with each other, their hearts beat as one. But suddenly on reaching the summit of their happiness they are separated by the grim hand of death. There we see a happy family journeying on the road of life. Everything looks serene and joyful, and not a cloud shows on the horizon. All of sudden the sky darkens, a stormy cloud appears, and the father or mother is snatched away from their midst. In vain do those left behind look for the return of their beloved, and their tear-stained eyes gaze upon the vacant chair in mute resignation.

3. The waters rushing down the falls do not stop there, but flow on at the lower level until, after mingling with the ocean, they begin again the endless journey and are carried again to the heights from which we see them fall. Is not this a good lesson for us not to give up when we are jolted in our way and are suddenly dragged down by misfortune? Does it not teach us to be patient in our state of lowliness and humiliation, and never stop until we reach again the height of our ambition?

Like the waterfall there are a thousand and one objects in Nature from which valuable lessons may be drawn. But Nature herself cares but little whether or not we learn from her. She is cold and indifferent to the fate of mankind and remains unmoved in the midst of continual changes.

Chap. VII.

GOD AND THE DEVIL.

There is perhaps no book in the world's literature that contains so much profound philosophy and lofty poetry as the Book of Job. This book begins with a story where the Devil is introduced as one of the chief actors. Let me quote a few verses of that wonderful book:

"Now it fell upon a day that the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan: "Whence comest thou?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." And the Lord said unto Satan: "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" (Job 1:6-8).

It is evident that the writer of the Book of Job did not think that Satan had the power to do as he pleased, but that he is dependent upon the authority of God. Satan is represented as bringing upon Job all the miseries and sufferings only after God

had given him permission to do so. In later times, however, Satan came to be viewed as one who is hostile to God and acts contrary to God's will.

It is a noteworthy fact, however, that the Jews never took the Devil too seriously, always subordinating his power to the will of God and even the will of those who were in close communication with God. This is clearly shown by the legend of Ashmodoi—another name for the Devil—which delighted my boyish fancy and which may interest some of my readers who never heard it before.

When King Solomon was building the Temple, so the legend goes, he found himself greatly embarrassed by the commandment in Exodus 20:26 which prohibits the use of iron tools in getting the stones for the altar. On consulting with his wise men he was told that there was a worm called "Shomir" which was able to cleave asunder any substance it was allowed to crawl on. This Shomir was created at the beginning of the world, and his whereabouts were known only to Ashmodoi, the prince of the devils. Now the problem was to get hold of Ashmodoi, whose headquarters were in the forest of Lebanon. Solomon despatched his secretary to find him. By a clever ruse Solomon's messenger put wine into the fountain from which Ashmodoi drew his supply of water. Ashmodoi got

drunk and was overpowered by Solomon's men who forced him to go with them to Jerusalem. While on the way to Jerusalem Ashmodoi behaved strangely. On seeing a drunken man fall he helped him to his feet. On passing a wedding procession he shed tears. When he heard a man ordering a pair of sandals that would last him seven years, he laughed and his laughter became uproarious when they passed a fortune teller plying his business on a street corner. After telling King Solomon where the Shomir can be found he was asked about his strange behavior on the way. "Why did you help the drunkard?" "Because" Ashmodoi replied "he was a thoroughly bad man who had no prospect whatever of a future life, and so I was prompted to make this life a little more comfortable for him." "Why did you weep at the sight of the wedding procession?" "Because I knew that the bridegroom was doomed to die within a month." "Why did you laugh at the man ordering sandals to last him seven years?" "Because I knew he would not live more than seven days." "And why was your laughter still more increased at seeing the fortune teller?" "Because that fool pretending to look into the future did not know that right beneath the place he was sitting there was buried a great treasure."

This legend, however, does not represent the Devil in the way that he was pictured by the majority of the people in the dark ages. The most common belief was that God was the author of every good thing, and the Devil the author of every evil thing. God was praised for all the good things, and the Devil was blamed for all the ills of life. Religious people believed in the Devil as strongly as they did in God. Even during the Middle Ages the belief in the Devil was universal. Luther, the great reformer, is known to have had many a struggle with the Devil, and one day, he got so angry with the Devil that he threw his inkstand at him. Even at the present time the Devil is a very real thing to many people. There seems to be among certain people an eleventh commandment which runs: "Thou shall not take the name of the Devil in vain." In fact, some people who have lost their faith in God, will still cling to their faith in the Devil.

Now, it is needless to say that a thinking man has no fear of the Devil, and has only pity for those who still cling to that gross superstition which has haunted the minds of men and caused them to burn poor witches and persecute anyone who was supposed to be in league with the Devil.

But while it is impossible to think of a personal Devil, such as we see in paintings, with the cloven

foot and horns and tail, it cannot be denied that there is in this world a mysterious force which works mischief and is the source of all the evil. This force is the counterpart of that other mysterious power which we call God and which is the source of all good.

One of the seven names for God in the Hebrew language is "El" which is derived from a word meaning power. This power in my opinion, controls both the good and the evil forces in the world. It is the Supreme Power and dwells not only in the Universe but also in the souls of men. Besides that Supreme Power there is no room for any such personality as the Devil. Evil spirits were supposed to prowl around during the dark hours of the night and to retreat with the dawn of the morning. Well, the dawn of morning has come for humanity and the Devil with his hosts of evil spirits must disappear to return no more.

But only the personal Devil is disappearing, the spiritual still remains. What I mean by spiritual Devil is the evil desire of the human heart, the temptation to go the wrong way, the inclination to satisfy the pleasures and appetites of the moment at the expense of the higher duties in life. There are in every human breast two powers struggling for supremacy, the good and the evil principle. This

struggle is renewed every day and only stops with our last breath. When the good principle is victorious we become godly men, when the evil principle is allowed to rule us we become ungodly and devilish.

But while man is equipped with reason and will power to fight against the evil principle within him, he often is helpless and defenceless against the evil forces in the world around him. How many are the victims of cruel and heartless Nature! How often are the best laid plans of man brought to naught by the mysterious evil forces which Nature displays in earthquakes, in storms, in droughts and epidemics. What is man's life but a constant fight with the devil in the dark, a never-ending game of blindman's buff? One of the company is blindfolded and then he is led about the room and the young folks buffet him, pull his ears, hit him in the back and have all kinds of fun with him in his temporary blindness. It sometimes happens that the blindfolded victim in his eagerness to catch his tormentors reaches forward, and missing his hold, tumbles to the floor to the great amusement of the onlookers.

A little reflection shows how very much human life resembles this game and is mirrored by it. Every one of us walks around in this wide world

with a veil over his eyes, groping in the darkness. It sometimes happens that we catch hold of the thing we are looking for and imagine that we have at least succeeded in our search for happiness. We plunge forward to seize it, but the devil cunningly trips us up and we go down sprawling to the ground, while the devil splits his sides with laughter. And thus throughout life we play in the dark and quite often are wounded and bruised in life's battle, which is nothing after all but a very serious game of "blindman's buff" played with his satanic majesty.

Well has the poet described life's struggle in these lines:

"Twist ye, twine ye! even so
Mingle shades of Joy and Woe,
Hope and Fear, and Peace and Strife,
In the thread of human life."

Chap. VIII.

GOD'S AND MAN'S WISDOM.

Is there a fixed and unalterable standard by which to judge what is wise and what is foolish? There may be such a standard in theory but when applied to practical life it is found to be just as unsteady and unreliable as is the standard of right and wrong, which just now has been completely upset by the European madness for gore and glory.

Who is wise and who is foolish? Where does folly end and wisdom begin? What seems the acme of wisdom to one man, is looked upon as the height of folly by another and vice versa. The great Newton was described by his neighbors in the village where he lived as "an old fool who may be seen blowing soap bubbles all day," while a man who devotes his whole life to increase his bank account by hook or crook is spoken of as "a wise guy."

Success in life would be a poor test of a man's wisdom or folly. For many a fool may succeed where a wise man fails. Many an inventor has

died in poverty and neglect while brainless men made millions in marketing his inventions.

As a matter of fact, wisdom and folly are never entirely separated from each other. We often notice a fool doing a very wise thing just as a blind hen will find a grain of corn, while a man whom we consider a wise man will commit a folly, and, the greater his wisdom the greater his folly. Where there is a great deal of light there is also a great deal of shadow, and when the brain is active there is danger of its acting in a wrong direction.

Reason is the light by which man guides his footsteps while journeying through this world, so full of dangers and pitfalls. And just as the bright rays of the sun are sometimes obscured by dark clouds, so man's reason, his light and guide, is sometimes beclouded and he stumbles and falls by the wayside.

Take for instance the case of a young married woman, having a beautiful home, a loving husband and lovely children. She has everything to make her happy and contented. But the old serpent which made its first appearance in the Garden of Eden crawls into the home and starts its devilish work. It is a serpent in the shape of a man, who makes love to her, and tries to alienate her husband's love. For a time she resists the blandishments of the

serpent, but in a moment of weakness, when a cloud hides her reason, she falls, the light of her life goes out, and darkness and sorrow settle over the beautiful home where happiness and virtue dwelt before.

But not only in human life do we find wisdom and folly so near each other that it is only a short step from the path of wisdom to that of folly. It is the same in the life of nature, which is popularly supposed to be governed by wisdom only, and to be free from error and mistakes. It is an undeniable fact that Nature does not always act wisely. Just to mention one instance. For centuries and centuries Nature would bestow her choicest gifts upon an island in the sea, and in a moment of anger she sends a tidal wave which destroys and swallows up all the work of countless ages.

There is a common saying, "Ignorance is bliss." This, like many other sayings, is only partially true. The bliss that ignorance gives is the bliss enjoyed by a stalled ox, who thinks only of his fodder. The wise man may suffer from his wisdom but he has compensations in life which are denied to a fool. In fact, the fool himself seems to refuse the bliss of ignorance, as is shown by his desire to be looked upon as a wise man. There are even some fools so conceited that they think themselves

wise above everybody else. A real wise man happened to meet such a conceited fool, and after listening for a while to his foolish pretensions to deep knowledge, he said: "My friend, you and I know everything that can be known." "Indeed!" exclaimed the fool, in a tone of exultation. "Yes," replied the wise man, "You seem to know everything except that you are a fool, and that—I know."

The only true wisdom without the admixture of folly is that attributed to God. His wisdom is pure and undefiled because there are no clouds to obscure his vision, and no passions to lead his judgment astray. Nothing is hidden to the divine wisdom, and the whole truth is revealed before it, as the insides of the human body are made visible by the X-rays.

No mortal man can ever reach such a high state of wisdom, because man's wisdom is the result of experience, and experience is limited in time and extent. And yet, it is well for us not to be discouraged in our search for wisdom. For even if the human wisdom will never be as great as the divine wisdom, yet it differs from the divine wisdom only in quantity but not in quality. This idea was in the mind of the Rabbis of old when they ordained that on seeing a wise man one should pronounce

this benediction: "Blessed art thou, o Lord, King of the universe, who has given a portion of his wisdom to a being of blood and flesh." By the way, I do not think that this benediction is very much recited even by the strictly orthodox Jew, for the simple reason that it is not so easy to decide who is really a wise man. Some people, I imagine, would never recognize a wise man even if they saw him, and others would be inclined to recite that benediction every time that they saw their own faces in the mirror.

In contemplating the divine wisdom we are liable to be overwhelmed and stunned by its immensity and greatness, just as one feels his own littleness and insignificance when he suddenly finds himself in a great crowd of people. But the feeling of littleness will soon disappear by the thought that after all this great mass of people is composed of single individuals such as he meets and greets on every street corner and therefore he need have no fear of them when they are assembled in large numbers in one place. So it is with the divine wisdom. While we cannot help being impressed by its greatness yet we need not be depressed by it, since we ourselves are a part and parcel of the divine wisdom, and we ourselves possess its substance in a smaller degree. As the Niagara is made

up of little water drops each of which is a part of the wonderful falls, and just as the vast Sahara is composed of tiny grains of sand so is the divine wisdom made up of smaller parts of intelligence possessed by man.

Now it might be asked if we are all partakers of the divine wisdom how does it come that this wisdom is in most people so stunted in its growth? Why is it that most of us never cut the wisdom tooth in a spiritual sense? Still more difficult becomes the question when we try to account for genius. What was it that made possible the appearance of men like Moses, Isaiah, Shakespeare, Washington, Edison? It would require more than human wisdom to give a satisfactory answer to this puzzling question. We hear nowadays a great deal of talk about the influence of heredity and environments. But heredity and environment utterly fail to account for the great men I have mentioned. Some people think that they have given a good answer when they say that a genius appears when the time is ripe for him, and that the demand for a genius will naturally create the supply. But this is hardly a correct answer, for we find that many great men appeared in the history of mankind and exerted no influence whatever on their contemporaries who even hated and persecuted them.

As a matter of fact, however, it is impossible to explain satisfactorily the appearance of genius. Like a sudden flash of lightning a genius appears and performs his mission and as suddenly disappears, but not without making the path of humanity brighter by raising the average of intelligence and dissipating the clouds of ignorance and superstition.

Just as in the physical world a force once put in motion continues to exist although in different forms, so in the realm of mind there is nothing lost. Everything that is manifested by the divine wisdom continues to work in the shaping of man's destiny. When I see a moving picture show I cannot help thinking that perhaps Edison was inspired to his invention by reading the Bible story of Belshazzar's feast which tells of the handwriting on the wall. The thoughts of to-day are the children of yesterday and the parents of to-morrow, and in this sense Solomon was right when he declared: "There is nothing new under the sun."

It is most unfortunate for mankind, however, that not only wise and noble thoughts are transmitted from one generation to another, but also foolish and ignoble thoughts. Much of the blind superstition of to-day is an heirloom of the past, and the czars of to-day are the spiritual successors

of the tyrants of old. How much better the world would be if folly would die with the fools and leave no heirs behind. But since such is not the case, it is the duty of the wise man to do all he can to exterminate the existing folly and to spread wise and good thoughts.

Limited, however, as human wisdom must forever remain, the progress of humanity tends to increase its scope and to decrease the foolish spirit which is shown by men in their social intercourse. At present there are a number of people who fool others, not only for the sake of gain but also because they consider it a sign of superior mentality to be able to fool other people. They tell of a man who on his return from a long voyage boasted that he had fooled all the people he met on his travels by telling them that his name was Max instead of his real name Jacob. While at present we are only guessing at some things, as the farmer tells the time by looking at the sun, we shall in the future be able to determine the exact state of things by means of instruments constructed by man's ingenuity, as the man with a well regulated watch can tell the time to the minute.

And while at present men cudgel their brains to invent instruments of warfare and take pains to discover more efficient bombs and torpedoes in

order to destroy human life more quickly and more numerously, the men of the coming generation will vie with each other in inventing instruments that will contribute to the peace and happiness of the whole human family.

Chap. IX.

GOD AND RELIGION

The outworn rite, the old abuse,
The pious fraud transparent grown,
The good held captive in the use
Of wrong alone,
These wait their doom, from that great law
Which makes the past time serve to-day;
And fresher life the world shall draw
From their decay.

—J. G. Whittier.

There is a saying attributed to Disraeli who when asked, "What is your religion?" replied, "The religion of sensible men." And what is the religion of sensible men? "Sensible men never tell." From a diplomatic standpoint Disraeli may have been right, but from a moral point of view he was utterly wrong. For it is the duty of every man to tell the truth as he sees it, even at the risk of per-

sonal inconvenience. If wise men had abstained from telling the truth for fear of becoming unpopular, the world would still be in grossest darkness, and we of to-day would worship images of wood and stone as our ancestors did in times past.

Transfer tickets given by the street-car conductors used to bear the legend. "Good for this day only." It is the same with religion. Every religion is of a transitory character. It has its day, and when the day is past it becomes as valueless as an old transfer-ticket. It is then called a superstition. Someone has well said that superstition is religion out of fashion, while religion is superstition in fashion. Now if the devotees of religion, like the devotees of fashion had been satisfied to look with contempt upon those who are not dressed up as they are, all would have been well. But to the eternal shame of humanity, the followers of religion always and everywhere considered it a sacred duty to force their religious views upon others by the fire and the sword. Hence the awful spectacle presented in history of the most bloody and outrageous deeds committed in the name and in behalf of religion. Religious fanatics sought to gain the favor of God by being cruel to their fellowmen. They imagined that the surest way to go to heaven was to turn this earth into hell.

With the advance of civilization religious fanaticism is subsiding, and only occasionally shows its ugly face, as for instance in darkest Russia, when an infuriated mob, urged on by priests of a religion which claims to be a religion of love, attacks innocent men, women and children in the most outrageous manner. Such outbreaks of religious fanaticism are, however, getting rarer every day, and on the whole we may safely say that religious people have lost the power, if not the will, to force their views upon others.

In looking, however, only upon the evil religion has brought into the world, we get only one side of the medal. There is another side to it. Religion has been a mighty factor in the building up of our civilization. It has helped to subdue the savage mind by inspiring him with dread and terror of a power supernatural and superior to him, and has taught him subjection and obedience to the chief or ruler who usually claimed to govern by the grace of God, a claim which the German Kaiser in our modern times is still very loth to give up. Moreover, religion has a useful function to perform even now. It is the opiate which is administered to suffering humanity for the purpose of producing sleep and forgetfulness of the thousand ills and pains of life. Religion has thus a very useful func-

tion in life, since it helps people to bear up under the heavy load of misery and affliction. As long, therefore, as religion sticks to the performance of this high office, and does not meddle and interfere with those who think they can get along without religious comfort, we cannot help honoring and respecting her for the high and exalted service she is doing to humanity.

But the trouble with religion, or rather with its representatives, is that they want to be more than mere comforters and consolers of mankind. They want to be the Lords and rulers of mankind. In order to show their importance they assert, first of all, that man is a religious being by nature. But in this they are obviously using words without meaning. If religion were one of the things which Nature demands what necessity would there be of having priests and preachers? Do we need any one to teach us the duty of taking food when we are hungry or seeking shelter from the storm? Has anybody ever heard of men being hired to preach the duty of race-preservation? All these things are natural instincts and are followed by mankind without any special set of men preaching and enlarging upon them. The fact that religion must be taught and continually preached to people is in itself sufficient proof that there is no such thing as

a natural religious instinct. Moreover, how does it come that Nature has failed to endow some men with the religious instinct? I, for one, am free to confess, that I am not possessed of the religious instinct. My belief in God, as I have shown in the First Essay, is based upon the unshakeable evidence furnished to my mind by facts of Reason and Nature. But as for religion, if by the word is meant a lot of forms and ceremonies commanded by God to be performed by man under penalty of punishment here or hereafter, there is absolutely not the faintest trace of it in my mental make-up.

Some pious people will no doubt find a short and easy way of answering my objections. They will call me a freak of nature. But how does it come, I would humbly retort, that some of the greatest minds have been devoid of the religious instinct? Is Nature so irregular and slip-shod in her workings?

Another fact which speaks against the assumption that religion is a natural thing may be seen in the multiplicity of religions. The faculties with which Nature endows man are the same among all races and nations of the earth. Why are there so many kinds of religion and so many divisions even among the followers of the same kind of religion? If Nature or God had been the author of religion

we would have no such variety of it. As it is, everybody thinks his own religion was given by God, while that of the other fellow is nothing but a superstition and falsehood. The worshipers of Moloch sacrificed their own children to that cruel God. The faithful Hindu throws himself under the crushing wheels of the juggernaut, the pious Russian will throw little Jewish infants from an upper-story window for the glory of God. Why does this supposed natural instinct show itself in so many different forms? And why does this "natural" instinct lead so many people to acts so diametrically opposed and deeply revolting to the better instincts of man?

It seems to me that there is no evidence whatever for the divine authorship of any religion, and each and all of them bear the trade-mark of human manufacture.

But we often have it dinned into our ears that religion is a matter of the heart and not of the head and we must believe blindly without asking any questions. That is a very convenient way for silencing all objections. But if people had never applied their test of reason to religious matters there would have been no progress whatever. We would all still worship idols of wood and stone.

I believe, therefore, that it is the duty of every

man to investigate for himself whether the religion he was born in is true or false, and if he finds that he cannot believe it he must say so without fear of consequences. At the same time, however, we should be tolerant and patient with those who are still under the spell of their childhood faith. A Free Thinker should not fall into the error common among religious people. He should not try to force his opinions upon others, but should rather trust to the power of truth to win the day.

A little story told of Senator Hoar may help us to raise our estimate of the good work done by religion for certain types of men:

Senator Hoar, so the story goes, was asked by a friend whom he was showing the town of Gloucester, Mass., what was the staple food of the people of that town. "Fish," the Senator replied. "They say," rejoined the other, "that fish is good for the brains, but these people do not look very intelligent." "Well," drawled the Senator, "just imagine how they would look if they didn't eat fish!" It is awful to contemplate how some people would act if they had no religion at all.

In almost all religions great stress is laid upon prayer to God. Just now there are prayers offered in all the churches of Europe for the success of the armies and navies in their fights with the enemy.

If God granted all those prayers Europe would become a howling wilderness. Unfortunately the very people who profess to rely upon God to help them have not much confidence in their own prayers and strain every nerve to get all the men and munitions to obtain the victory. They tell of an itinerant preacher who came to a village where the people had been praying in vain for rain. The preacher told them that their prayers remained unanswered because they did not believe with their whole heart that God would answer their prayers. Thereupon he appointed a prayer meeting for the next day and admonished the people to come to the meeting with the blessed assurance that God would graciously listen to the supplication of his children. When on the following day all the people had assembled the preacher told them that there was no use of holding a prayer meeting as they had no real faith that God would grant their prayer. The people protested and said that they truly believed. But the preacher said: "No, you don't! For I am the only one that brought an umbrella along!"

Prayer to God is generally accompanied by praises of God. And what praises! so exuberant, so flattering! No wonder that prayer coupled with that kind of praise remains unanswered. If a friend or a child of mine should ask me for a favor and

would start by telling me what a glorious and wonderful man I am, I would be anything but pleased. Why should God be so much pleased hearing his endless praises sung?

To get a true estimate of the nature of singing praises to God, let us imagine that millions of water drops which the clouds gathered up from the sea and let fall on dry land were by some miracle changed into human beings and endowed with reason and speech. It would be quite natural for these transformed water drops on beholding the great and mighty ocean to become conscious of their own littleness and insignificance, and to be deeply impressed by the greatness and power of the ocean that carries on its bosom huge ships, and in a moment of anger tosses them about like grains of sand. The former raindrops anxious to give expression to their feelings decide to build special buildings where they might assemble at stated times and speak and sing in honor of the ocean. By and by they become so imbued with the greatness and power of the ocean that their thoughts turn to the ocean in all their perplexities of life. If they get sick, they pray to the ocean to heal them; if there is a drought they pray for rain; if they start out to kill their enemies they pray for help, and if they feel that their life's course is run and they must

return to the place whence they came, they make haste to ask the ocean's forgiveness of sins. Now, while the larger number of these transformed raindrops act in the way described there is a minority of them who are of a different mind. This minority have not entirely forgotten their former state of existence. They remember that they have been at one time a part of the great ocean and therefore they do not join in the peans of praises sung to the ocean. They feel that having originated from the ocean they could not sing the praises of the ocean without praising themselves, and self-praise is not very becoming in any man.

Every religion claims to have been revealed by God. Now since the various religions contradict each other, it follows that God contradicted himself. Let us take a simple case. The Jew claims that God commanded to keep the Saturday holy, the Christian makes the same claim for Sunday, and the Mohammedan for Friday. But not only did God contradict himself in the making of different religions, he also is represented as having changed his mind in regard to every existing religion. For there is not a single religion that has not undergone important changes during the course of its development. For instance, God is represented in the Bible to have advised Abraham to commit biga-

my by taking Hagar as an additional wife and to commit murder by sacrificing his son Isaac. Is it possible that God acted so inconsistently? As a matter of fact, when we find in the Bible "Thus saith the Lord" and read attentively what he said, we find it hard to believe, that he really ever said it. The old teachers of religion were obliged to preface their remarks by a "Thus saith Lord" in order to get the attention of the people, just as the Billy Sundays of to-day claim to have been told by God to warn the sinners of the everburning torture that is waiting for their sinful bodies in the hell of fire and brimstone. A thinking man will not believe blindly all the things that are said in the name of God, but will examine for himself whether the things are worthy of God or not, whether or no they correspond with the eternal principles of truth and justice.

But while there is yet a great deal of blind belief there is also a great deal of blind unbelief, which is shown by people who deny everything without giving any reason for denial. The blind believer, for instance, believes that when God wanted to speak to Moses, he made him come up to Mount Sinai and stay with him forty days, while the blind unbeliever laughs at the idea that God ever spoke to man. Now it seems to me that these ex-

treme views are both wrong and that the truth lies in the middle. If God wants to speak to any man he need not invite him to go up into a mountain or to ascend into heaven. God has the best equipped wireless apparatus at his disposal, and he can communicate with man from any distance. And God does indeed speak to man, but in a code language, which can be understood only by him who has the key to it. And the key to the divine language can be obtained only by being in harmony with the divine thought. But sometimes we think we have the proper key and fall into error. We hear the divine word but misinterpret its meaning. This happened to the prophets of old who prophecied lies in the name of God. Most of them were not wilful liars, but were deceived deceivers. They misinterpreted the words of God. Such is also the case with many idolaters who are honest in their superstitious beliefs and practices.

If we want to understand the divine language we must keep our minds in tune with things divine, and must keep our thoughts pure from all evil and meanness. Thought is a most powerful factor in life. The importance of thought may best be seen from the fact that we find here and there a man who commits suicide. The love of life is very strong in every living being; even a fly loves to live and

anxiously avoids all dangers of death. And yet, here is a man who voluntarily ends his own life for no other reason than that his thoughts have become so dreadful to him that he must get rid of them even at the cost of his life. In fact, man's worst enemies are sometimes his own thoughts. Even if he is successful in his fight against his outside enemies, against hostile Nature, against ferocious animals and fierce fellow beings, his victories avail nothing unless he keeps down the enemy within his own breast, the harrowing and evil thoughts which lure him to misery and destruction, and stop his ears from hearing the divine language.

The spread of universal education and the growth of the spirit of brotherliness among men will do much to counteract and finally to subdue the dark powers of fanaticism and bigotry. For bigoted and bloodthirsty religious zealots are not unlike certain microbes which thrive best in dark and damp places, but are sure to be killed off as soon as they are exposed to the sunlight and fresh air. The piercing rays of reason will in due time exterminate those pestilential microbes which have been sapping the life blood of poor mankind during countless ages past.

The sun, however, does not rise in his majestic splendor all at once. He first is seen on the moun-

tain tops, and gradually sends down his golden rays on the valleys below. Let us, therefore, be tolerant and patiently wait for the time when religion will no longer mean the observance of this or that ceremony, or the vain repetition of this or that creed, but when, as the prophet has it: *"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."*

GOD AND THE SOUL.

The soul of man
Resembleth water:
From Heaven it cometh,
To Heaven it soareth,
And then again
To earth descendeth,
Changing ever.

—Goethe.

All efforts to give an exact definition of the soul meet with the same difficulties that confront us when we try to define God. The soul, like God, was never seen by human eyes, yet its existence cannot be doubted by any reasonable man. In my boyhood days I used to recite the morning prayer where this passage occurs: "My God, the soul which thou hast given me is pure; thou hast created it; thou hast formed it; thou hast breathed it into me, thou preservest it within me; and thou wilt take it from me and return it to me in time to come." After many years of thought on the subject of the soul, I must confess, that I do not agree in all points with the statement concerning the soul made in that prayer.

What is the soul? To my mind the soul is a part of God, a spark of the divine fire, a drop of

the eternal ocean. It is, therefore, immortal as is the source from which it comes.

In the following pages I shall endeavor to present some of the reasons which have convinced me that "dust thou art and to dust thou returnest" only applies to the human body but not to the soul that inhabits the body. Perhaps some philosophers will smile at my simple arguments presented in plain language, but my soul shall be satisfied if I succeed in convincing only one of my fellowtravelers on life's journey of the great and inspiring truth of the immortality of the soul.

As sure as I live so sure I am that I shall not die. Not that I expect to be translated like Enoch or to go up to heaven in a chariot of fire, like the prophet Elijah, or that science will succeed in discovering the Elixir of Life. I expect nothing of the kind. I rather think that some day I shall die in the old fashioned way, and be as dead as a doornail. They will put my body into the grave, covered perhaps with some flowers and tears, and it will be generally believed that I am dead. But I know that I shall never die. My body, the garment of my soul, will be worm-eaten, the house wherein my "I" dwelt, will crumble to dust, but my real "I", that which lives, thinks and feels within me will never die.

There are several reasons which lead me to this firm conviction, and although each taken separately may not be of great convincing power, yet if joined together they furnish overwhelming evidence in favor of a life beyond the grave.

Everybody must admit that the mind in man is more important than the body. You may remember Dr. Watson's famous reply to a critic who ridiculed him on account of the smallness of his stature:

> Were I as tall to reach the Pole,
> Or grasp the ocean with a span,
> I would be measured by my soul;
> The mind is the standard of the man.

As a matter of fact, instead of saying man has a body that has a soul, we would say, Man has a soul that has a body, the soul being the paramount thing in the constitution of man. The real essence and substance of the soul is a mystery.

We know only what it is not, and are safe in saying that it is not like any of the things which we can taste, smell or touch. How then can we say that the soul dies because we see everything around us dissolve and decay? The soul stands absolutely alone, and nothing that we see in the world can be compared with it. Hence the burden of proof is with those who deny the immortality of the soul,

and as long as there is no evidence to the contrary, we are justified in our assumption, that although all other things decay and die, the soul, being *sui generis,* is not subject to the laws observed in the material world, and lives on forever.

But even in the material world about us nothing dies and nothing is lost. The indestructibility of matter is one of the main pillars upon which all physical science, especially that of chemistry, rests. Any one can convince himself of the truth that matter will disappear and yet not be really lost by this simple experiment.

Suppose you fill a pail with water and allow it to stand for some time in the kitchen, you will find the water is gradually disappearing and after a while it will be entirely gone. Where did the water go to? Was it annihilated? Of course not. It simply assumed another form for the time being, and in due time it will return to the earth as water. Even so it is with our soul. The law of nature that nothing can be destroyed in the material world holds good also in the spiritual. It is only the dust that returns unto dust, but the spirit remains a spirit. Strictly speaking, even the body is not destroyed altogether, for it changes into elements which in their turn contribute to sustain life on earth.

Take another illustration. Here is an electric motor, working in the finest style. Of a sudden it stops. Who would think for a moment that the electric power has ceased to exist? We know well enough that the trouble in only with the apparatus, and sure enough as soon as the apparatus is fixed, the electric force is at work again. So it is also with the body and the soul. The body grows old and shows signs of decay, but the motive power, the soul, does not grow old and never loses its vitality.

Those who disbelieve in immortality are inclined to compare man with a locomotive, which is lively and active when in good condition, but when it breaks down, the steam escapes and it becomes stiff and dead. Granted for the sake of argument that the soul of man is like the steam which escapes from the locomotive, the question arises what becomes of the steam? To say that it is lost would be a great mistake, for the steam only ceases to be steam, but is not annihilated. It condenses and assumes again the form it had before the heat extended it.

It is sheer nonsense to say that man is nothing more than a very sensitive and highly organized and intricate mechanical apparatus, and all his actions are performed in a way similar to that of a well-regulated watch. How foolish this mechanic-

al view of man is! Has the watch a soul? Has it a heart? Does it feel pain and pleasure? Does it love and hate? Does a watch propagate its kind and transmit its life to other watches? A watch is a dead thing even while it is performing its functions, but man, thinking and feeling man will be alive though he is apparently dead.

There is a tendency in our sceptical age to deny the future life of the soul. Many a person takes for his motto: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." I believe that is a great mistake. The Good Book says: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Prov., xx., 27.

As the burning of the candle slowly but surely brings about the final extinction of the candle, so it is with the life of man. The very act of living brings him every day nearer to death, which must inevitably ensue as soon as the vital force has burned itself out. Before this happens many a man asks himself, "what will become of me after my life is extinguished, whither shall I go then?" This question, however, is a foolish one and is no more justified than if the candle would ask, "where will I go after I cease to burn?" The real question is not as regards the future, but should be directed toward the past. Not "whither *shall* I go," but "whither *did* I go," while I was burning or living,

would be the correct form of the question. Man is not dying at the end of his years, but he is rather dying every day of his life. His force of life is being spent by every breath he exhales and by every motion he makes. Where does that force go? My answer is that as there is no force in the universe which can ever disappear altogether, so the vital force of man is never lost altogether. The sparks of life, which are burning in every human soul, do never become entirely extinct, but rather return to the great source of the Heavenly fire from which they have come.

Furthermore, not only is there anything in the laws of nature which would militate against the idea of the immortality of the soul, but, contrarywise, Nature herself furnishes us with a striking evidence for that great truth. I refer of course to the revival of Nature that takes place in the springtime of every year.

When the autumn leaves are falling and all nature prepares for winter's sleep, we grow sad, but doubt not for one moment that the coming winter will be followed by the spring season. We are pretty sure that nature will after the winter is gone wake up from her seeming slumber, and sky and streams, field and forest renew their joyous life. The flowers will bloom again and the birds will join

in the great hallelujah chorus. Why should there not be a springtime for the soul of man?

One of the strongest arguments, however, for the continuance of the soul after death, I find in the existence of so much of pain and misery in this world. My sense of justice revolts against the thought that this is all there is in life for the millions of my fellow-beings. All about us we see wrecked and wasted lives, we see so many people whose life is a constant grind and a weary treadmill, and to whom not a ray of sunlight comes to light up their dark and dreary existence. It is impossible that these unfortunate people were born into this world simply to suffer for a few years and then disappear forever. Can the ruler of this universe be so cruel and unjust? Surely there must be another life where these poor creatures will have more pleasure and less pain, more joy and less grief, more of heaven and less of hell.

It is very likely that the apparent injustice in human affairs suggested the idea of the transmigration of the soul, an idea which took possession of inquiring minds of all ages and nations. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras made the transmigration of the soul an important part of his philosophic teachings. The Buddhistic philosophy is full of it, and in the Jewish Kabbalah it is spoken of as a

real fact. At present the Theosophists are staunch advocates of that theory, which they call "The Reincarnation of the Soul."

I am inclined to believe in the transmigration of the soul because by the help of this doctrine we are enabled to get some light on a subject which is almost as mysterious as death, namely, sleep.

What becomes of us when we are sleeping? Nobody knows yet the exact purpose and meaning of sleep and dreams. Sleep is an absolute necessity for every human being, and even the strongest man cannot live without it. Sleep is very similar to death, and if are unable to fathom the secret of dreams, we shall be still less able to lift the veil that covers the face of death.

Is there any truth in dreams? I think there is. But since the truth is not clearly seen, and since there are many things in dreams that are false, it is thought advisable not to pay too much attention to dreams. How it is possible to see true things in dreams may be shown by this illustration. The captain of a ship would be helpless without a telescope by his side. Such a telescope is also to be found in Nature. She is an eye that sees very far, and without it it would be impossible for the planets to continue in their courses. There must be a far-seeing force which can foresee what will

happen after a time. The eye of man and his reason is a part of that great eye and great reason, both having the same source and origin. But on account of his body his eye and reason are not in close touch with the deity, and are unable to look into the future. But in sleep the influence of the body is weakened and the mind is allowed full sway so that it may come into more intimate relations with the great eye and reason, the divine forces, which are able to discern the future events. It is, therefore, quite possible for man to see in sleep things that are true. Dreams have a strong resemblance to moving pictures. All the pictures shown on the screen must first be photographed. So it is also with our brain which reproduces pictures of things which have been first photographed on our brain cells. But how does it come that we often see in our dreams men and things which we have never seen in our waking state? This may be explained by the supposition that we see in our dreams men and things we have seen in a former existence. One soul descends from another soul, and the experiences of a soul that has lived many years ago are transmitted to its descendants. We find that a grandparent's yellow hair will reappear in one of his grandchildren. If physical traits are in this way inherited, why should it not be so with mental

traits? I do not think that dreams are false. All we can say it that we do not understand them. It is as if a man would take up a thick volume of a book full of profound thoughts and pick out one page and then say that because he does not understand that one page there is no sense in the whole book. That one sentence may have a deep meaning when the page is read in connection with the preceding and following pages.

The reason why I think that our present existence is connected with our former existence is because this alone affords an explanation of the apparent injustice in the world. Just as Nature's upheavals, as for instance thunder storms and floods, are not without aim or purpose, so is also the dispensation of Providence not without justice, and those who suffer now are punished for misdeeds committed by them in a former existence. I do not believe in a hell painted by religious fanatics as a place where the souls of the wicked are tormented with fire and brimstone, but I do believe that there is a hell on earth. If we see how many people suffer through all their life-time, how misfortune follows them in all their undertakings, how everything goes against them, we cannot but come to the conclusion that there is a hell on this our beautiful earth.

The idea of reincarnation appeals to me more than the idea of a heaven and hell where the pious ones live in eternal idleness and luxury, while the wicked ones are all the time "in a stew." This world, according to the view of religionists, is of no value at all. It is merely a sort of recruiting station where the emissaries of God and the devil vie with each other to induce as many as they can to join their ranks. I think, however, that there is a great, though hidden, aim and purpose in the maintenance of human life on this earth.

But while the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul is after all a matter of speculative philosophy, its underlying idea is true beyond any doubt. It is a mistake to think that our life begins when we are born and ends when we die. Such would be the case if man would come into this world without parents and leave it without offspring. But since man is the child of parents, his life began before his birth and is only a continuance of his parents' life, and since man leaves children behind him, his life does not come to an end with the close of his own life, but is continued in the life of his children. There is no real break in human life, it goes on forever, just as the sun never ceases to shine, although we speak of sunrise and sunset. The life of each generation is linked with the life

of the preceding and following generation, just as today is closely connected with yesterday and tomorrow. A simple illustration will make this point clear. The patriarch Jacob is said to have come to Egypt with his family consisting of seventy people. That was about 3500 years ago. His descendants number now nearly 15 millions. Can it be truly said that Jacob died in Egypt? Does he not live not only in the memory of the Jews, but also in the actual bodies and souls of his descendants? Human life is well pictured in Tennyson's Brook "Men may come, men may go, but I go on forever."

The evolution theory, which in its essential points has been accepted by all philosophers of the present generation, may be also appealed to in favor of Reincarnation. All things develop and evolve from a lower to a higher state, from a simple to a more complex organism. Why should this not hold good of the soul, too? And where else but on this planet and among the environments of this life is there an opportunity for the soul to grow and to expand so as to be more in harmony with the great Soul of the Universe?

As a stir-up thought—somewhat like a "stirrup cup"—let me quote the following lines, which express the profound truth that, after all, the highest life is that which has for its aim the betterment and advancement of man life and thought:

"Live like the flower!
So bud, so bloom, in growing beauty live;
So sweeten life with the perfume that gentle actions give.

"Die like the flower!
So that when thou art gone, sweet, happy thoughts of thee,
Like fragrant rose leaves may be strewn upon thy memory."

CONCLUSION

The reader who was kind enough to follow me in the foregoing chapters will, I hope, agree with me on these two points:

First, that it is impossible to get a perfect understanding of God, and second that it is nevertheless our privilege and duty to try to find a solution for the problem of God. Blind fanaticism denounces every attempt to give a rational explanation of God. Like one of Job's comforters they say: "Canst thou find out the experience of God? or canst thou find the way unto the utmost limit of the Almighty?" (Job. 11:7). But this objection is as foolish as it would be to say that because geologists are unable to tell the exact age of the earth, therefore all their discoveries are to be distrusted. The Deity is eternal, without beginning and without end, and it stands to reason that the human mind being finite cannot fully comprehend the Infinite.

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

(Note: Some of the following articles have been printed before in various newspapers, but I thought they might be deserving of a more enduring life in a book.)

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WHO IS TO BE BLAMED FOR THE PRESENT WAR?

To fix the responsibility for the awful calamity which has befallen European civilization is not so easy a matter. Even if all the facts which led up to the declaration of war were clearly known it would be difficult to draw the right conclusion from them, because each party claims to be in the right and to fight for the highest ideals, while the other party is accused of being in the wrong. They mutually accuse each other of being responsible for the war.

In my book, *"Homespun Philosophy,"* I have a paragraph which is quite pertinent to the subject. Let me quote it:

"It is human nature to think of oneself more highly than of another. Hence our own views are always considered the right ones, while those of

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[Note:—The following article was published in December 1914 in a periodical of mine called "Seed of Thought." Although many things have changed since that time, I think it will not be without interest to have it printed again, since my hope for universal peace is still cherished by all who love their fellowmen. Recent events in Russia have realized the hope expressed in this article that "the crowns will be taken from the despotic rulers."]

our neighbors are held to be wrong. This is the fruitful source of all the quarrels, wars and bloodshed. If men could forget their own selves while thinking, there would be more harmony and peace among them."

In my humble opinion no particular individual or nation can be held responsible for bringing on the war. When a furious windstorm comes and causes destruction of life and property, can anybody be blamed for it? It is just as unjust and foolish to single out any one individual or nation as the originator of this awful European catastrophe.

Have you ever been caught in a storm while walking along the sea beach on a bright summer afternoon?

The ocean is as smooth as a mirror. There is hardly breeze enough to flutter your handkerchief. But all of a sudden the blue sky is darkened by heavy clouds, the wind begins to blow, and soon the waves strike against the shore with tremendous noise and fury. What was it that caused this sudden transformation of the landscape? There are, no doubt, natural causes for this change, but the change is, after all, a mystery of nature, which science will never succeed in clearing up.

And as it is in nature, so it is also in the aggregate life of human beings, which constitute the various nations of the world.

For a time everything goes on smoothly. Peace and concord reign supreme. The most friendly relations are established and maintained among the peoples of the various countries, and there is not a cloud to be observed on the political horizon. All of a sudden there comes a terrible storm. The passions of men for gold and glory are aroused, the waves of racial and religious emotion run high, and in their fury they swallow up all the noble and humane thoughts of centuries of civilization.

Brother-man fights against brother-man, and blood is flowing like water.

Will war and bloodshed ever disappear from the face of the earth? My heart inspires me to hope so, but my reason denies the hope. True enough, poets and prophets have seen visions of a time when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks," but, alas! real life is far from such poetic visions. Everywhere we find a struggle for existence. The big fish eat the small fish, and the lion devours the lamb. If the lion is to abandon his lamb-devouring activity how can he continue to exist?

The perpetual struggle carried on among the

lower grades of creatures, is bound to characterize the life of the highest creature-man. Advancing civilization will make war less cruel and less frequent, but it will not abolish it altogether. So far it seems that civilization has had the tendency to make the instruments of war more effective and destructive. The hope that the new inventions of death-dealing weapons will make war impossible has been rudely shattered by the present war.

When we, therefore, inquire into the cause and origin of this present war we make a great mistake if we hold any one nation responsible for it. We must find its cause in some secret force of nature, a force which works in ways not understood by man. Against this force man is powerless. Can man stop the rain or silence the roaring of the windstorm? Even so would it have been impossible to oppose the secret force of nature which was driving the nations into war.

But there is a silver lining to this black war-cloud, and there will come out of this disaster and calamity benefits and blessings. When the father of this country heroically fought his fight against English tyranny there was great suffering in the land. Many precious lives were lost in the battles, and many more were wounded and crippled for life. Widows and orphans were bemoaning their

fate, and poverty and distress were keenly felt. But those sacrifices and sufferings were not in vain. They resulted in giving to millions of human beings the blessings of life, liberty and happiness. And so we have no doubt that out of this awful war and destruction there will come the blessings of prosperity and peace. The storm will clear the atmosphere, and bright sunshine will dispel the darkness and misery.

Of one thing we may be sure. The effect of the war will be the weakening and eventual collapse of the royal thrones in Europe. The crowns will be taken from the heads of the despotic rulers, and a new era of liberty and happiness will dawn in Europe and shed its bright light over all the world.

THE MESSIAH WILL COME

"Israel shall be helped by the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed and not be confounded unto all eternity." (Isa. 45:17.)

The morning prayer of the devout Jew concludes with the recital of the creed, consisting of 13 articles of faith, the twelfth of which reads as follows: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, yet will I daily wait for his coming."

As a boy I used to recite this article of faith; and now, after many years, I find myself still hoping and waiting for the coming of the Messiah, but not in the sense in which the word "Messiah" is used in the prayerbook. I can no longer believe that one man was or ever will be the Messiah of the whole world. That is too big a job for any one man to undertake and carry out successfully. I do, however, believe that there have been and there will be many Messiahs, and what is more, that every man ought to be his own Messiah. If that happens, then the world will be redeemed and the true Messiah will have come.

But however much opinions may differ concerning what the Jewish prophets and poets meant when they spoke of the glory of the Messiah, there

can be but one opinion as to the world's crying need of a Messiah, which need is particularly brought home to us when we consider the most unfortunate condition of the Jewish people in their exile among the nations of the world.

The Jew in exile is, alas, like a sheep which has strayed from the fold and is unable to find its way back home. Fatigued and exhausted from hunger and thirst, the forlorn sheep runs hither and thither, looking despairingly at the mute trees of the gloomy forest. Suddenly there appears before its straining eyes a gleam of light in the distance, the wretched sheep thinking that the light will be the means of guiding it to the lost home, takes new courage and, gathering together all the strength left in its weak and emaciated body, it runs joyfully to the spot, whence the light appeared. But alas! the light was only a will-o'-the-wisp, and on its way to reach it the poor sheep runs into the maws of a hungry wolf.

How true a picture this is of the Jew in exile!

For two thousand years the Jew has been an exile from his own country and a wanderer on the face of the earth. How often was he driven from one country to another and hunted down like a wild beast! Even when he was allowed to settle in a country, he was generally looked upon as a

stranger and treated with coldness and suspicion; the plainest human rights were often denied him, and his life and property were always at the mercy of a greedy potentate or bloodthirsty mob. Innocent Jewish blood has been shed in almost every part of the civilized world, and the persecution of the Jew has no parallel in all human history.

And who were the perpetrators of those violent deeds against the Jews? Humanity must cover its face in shame and sorrow because of the awful fact that those who inflicted such inhuman cruelties upon the Jew had all the appearance of men and seemed to be fashioned after God's own image. What is more, they were his own brothers, born and raised in the same family, nurtured and cared for by the same mother.

Who can fathom the grief and despair of the Jewish soul when brooding over his fate he asked himself: Why do these brothers of mine hate and persecute me? What have I done to excite their cruel and inhuman passions against me?

Now and then it happened that the Jew, like the lost sheep, saw a gleam of light in the distance; he would take new courage and hope and his heart would beat with joy over the expected rescue from his great peril and danger. At last, he would say to himself, the end of my suffering has come. But he

was disappointed again and again. The light he saw was a false light, the Messiah he hoped for was as far as ever.

Weary and footsore the wandering Jew kept up his restless search for a resting place, and in his agony and despair we can hear him cry out: Oh God, how long, oh, how long wilt thou let me suffer? How much longer shall I be an outcast and an outlaw among the nations of the world? How canst thou, O merciful God, patiently look on while thy children are so mercilessly treated? Is it nothing to thee that we are accused of all kinds of misdeeds and even of ritual murder, for the sole reason that our accusers may find the opportunity they seek of giving vent to their malice and hatred and inciting the brutish people to pogroms which result in outrageous crimes against the life and honor of helpless men, women and children? When, oh, when will the Messiah come?

Many and various are the propositions made to stop this cry of despair and bring peace and comfort to the eternal wanderer.

The most recent and most fascinating solution of the Jewish problem is that advocated by the Zionists, who claim that the only way to stop Jewish persecution is to establish a Jewish state in Palestine and thus end the long and dreary exile

of the Jew. To my mind, however, Zionism will not bring the longed-for relief for the persecuted Jew. Apart from all the great difficulties that would have to be overcome, there is this to be considered: Supposing all obstacles to have been removed and the Jewish state has been established, what guarantee is there that the Jewish state will be able to defend itself against the attacks of its enemies?

In my opinion the Jewish state would only increase the danger to the safety and welfare of the Jewish people, since it would tell the bloodthirsty wolf where to find the hapless sheep. Instead of having isolated pogroms at long intervals there would be enacted a pogrom on a large scale, a wholesale massacre, such as mankind never witnessed before. No indeed! Zion will always be dear to the Jewish heart and a precious memory to his soul, but it can never become his home again.

And why? Because the Jew cannot and must not separate himself from the rest of the world. He must remain among the nations of the world where an inscrutable providence has placed him for a great and noble purpose. And this purpose is nothing more nor less than to teach mankind the lesson of humanity, to bring light to those who sit in darkness, and to make the captives free. In

short, Israel's mission among the nations is to prepare the way for the Messianic time, so that every man may become his own Messiah. The emancipation of man's serfdom from his enslavement by his Satanic nature will not be accomplished by a man descending from heaven, but will be brought about only then when man will have become heavenly.

Why was Israel scattered over all the earth? It was because they were appointed by a divine Providence to be the teachers of mankind. Now, since it is their sacred mission to be the bearers of light and truth, they must remain there where they can best fulfill their high mission, and that is the places and countries where they are now.

The words spoken by Moses concerning the law might be fitly applied to the Messiah. When Moses speaks of the law he says: "For the commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee neither is it too far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deut. 30: 11-14.)

Yes, indeed, the Messiah will not come from heaven, nor will he come from over the sea. He is very near unto us, he is in our heart if we only do Messianic work.

A similar view concerning Israel's mission is held by no less an authority than Mr. Claude Montifiore in his famous book entitled *"Bible for Home Reading."*

Let me quote two brief passages from that book.

"The 'Kingdom of priests' must exercise its priestly functions for the benefit of the world. The Jews are called for a special purpose; to them the Knowledge of God came early in their history.

"In harmony with the highest teachings of the Bible about Israel is its highest teachings about the future. God wills that His world, the world of man, shall become better, not worse. With the optimism of faith the Hebrew seers and poets look forward to a Golden Age; they do not relegate it to a distant and irrecoverable past. Righteousness and peace shall at last prevail."

It seems to me, therefore, that the only salvation of the Jew lies in his courageous performance of his high duties to mankind. The Jew must go on teaching the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. He must teach people to love each other, although he is hated and persecuted. He

must do his best to break down the barriers between man and man, not only for the benefit of all humanity but also for his own benefit. For we may be sure of one thing, namely, that as long as there prevails the foolish hatred between the various races of the world, just so long will the Jew be hated.

I say that racial hatred is foolish, nay more, it is a crime. But someone might say: Is it not a natural thing that we should love our own race more than that of any other? Is not "blood thicker than water?" My reply is: Quite so. But the love for one's own race should never inspire hatred for another race. On the contrary, it should lead to love all men. He that loves only his own race is an egoist of the worst kind, and is generally an intolerant and narrow-minded man. A man whose heart does not beat for all humanity is a fanatic, and it is fanaticism and intolerance which retard the progress of humanity.

But thanks be to God that the dark clouds of fanaticism are disappearing slowly but surely before the light of civilization and progress. Even in darkest Russia the light is getting to be stronger and more penetrating, as was so clearly shown in the recent Beilis trial, where the dark powers of superstition had to crouch back into their holes

because the whole civilized world was arrayed against them and would not tolerate the Russian bear to crush the poor, innocent victim to death. This Beilis case shows that after all truth is mightier than falsehood, and it is a source of courage and hope for the Jew to go on in his work of spreading truth and light, despite all obstacles and stumbling blocks placed in his way.

I believe the time is not far when the nations of the world will come to the Jew, as did Joseph's brethren, and ask his forgiveness for the wrongs they have inflicted upon him. And the Jew, like Joseph, will say: "Ye meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20.)

Yes, indeed, the sufferings of the Jew have been the cause of the "saving of many people," and only when the Jew will stick to his sacred mission in the world, all mankind will be saved from the terrible power of dark fanaticism.

To sum up, then, the true Messiah is not to be expected to come from heaven, nor can we hope to meet him on going across the sea, as the Zionists dream. There is no personal Messiah. In the heart of every earnest, intelligent man there dwells the Messiah, which is the love of God and fellow man. And all of us may do something to spread

the knowledge of that Messiah, and thus hasten the glorious time, when every man will recognize in the face of every other man the image of God, and when all racial and religious hatred will be wiped off the face of the earth, and all-embracing, all-conquering Love will shine from every face.

King David's words: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" ring in my ears, and my eyes see in the far distance Jew and Gentile walking arm in arm in the sunlit path of Love.

AT MY MOTHER'S GRAVE

Dedicated to the Memory of My Mother
MRS. ROSIE COHEN
Who passed into the higher life
October 18, 1912. Cheshvan 7, 5673.

I decked her grave not with flowers but with tears that came from the heart which she had carried beneath her heart even before it beat, and which she had filled with emotions of love and veneration.

When my guide in the "City of the Dead" stopped and, pointing to a little mound, softly said: "Here it is. Your mother's grave," I had to grasp his arm for support. My head began to swim and my feet to sink. But soon I regained my composure, and he withdrew, leaving me alone with my mother. With my mother? Alas! My mother was not there. This little grave could not hold my mother. If she were there she would surely rise to embrace me. No, no! She is not here. What they buried here were only her garments. But where art thou, oh mother dear? Why don't you answer to my calls of distress? Have you forgotten me? Can a mother forget her child?

Alas! It must be true. My mother is gone and

I am by her grave bemoaning my loss. And oh! How great is my loss!

I never before realized how much my mother was to me. The greatest blessings given to man are never fully appreciated by him until he loses them. We never know the full value of youth until we are getting old; we hardly appreciate the blessing of good health until sickness overtakes us; and nobody fully understands the meaning of liberty until he is deprived of it. Even so did I not until now fully realize what my mother was to me. Oh, what a friend I had in her! She was the truest and most faithful of friends. There was no flaw in her friendship. I could pour out to her my whole heart, holding back nothing. In my joys I would come to her and she doubled them; in pain and sorrow I would hasten to her and she relieved me by taking me to her heart and giving me aid and comfort. She was the sun of my life and the soul of my soul.

Nevermore shall I look into her beautiful face, beautiful in spite of the wrinkles which care and anxiety for my welfare had imprinted there. Nevermore shall I behold the Shekina in her eyes as she said her prayers when lighting the Sabbath candles. Hushed forever is the voice that spoke so tenderly and gently to me. Oh, miserable man that I am, to have been bereft of such a mother!

I looked through the mist of tears at the little heap of ground before me and asked myself: "Is this cold and dark abode a fitting end for her life? Is this the reward for the good she has done, for the troubles and pains she has endured? Is it possible that a just God shall deal so unjustly with man? Can it be that all that is left of my beloved mother is her body mouldering in the grave? If so, what was the purpose of her life? Is it possible that we know nothing more of the aim and end of our life on earth except that we must die? And is there nothing more beyond death than the dark abode in the ground and the feeding of worms? My reason forbids me to accept this as true. And if my reason rebels against this, why, oh merciful Father, hast thou given me a mind which raises these questions and brings about confusion and tumult in my soul? If we perish like the beasts of the field would it not have been a thousand times better to have been also as they are without the inquiring mind and the eagerness to know the truth?

And as I stood with bowed head and tearful eyes all alone in the midst of death I seemed to hear a voice, as did the great sufferer, Job, of old. And the voice said: "Know thou, son of man, that death has a high and holy purpose? It aims to teach you how to live. What does it profit a man

to gain the whole world if he is sure to lose it again? What sense is there in accumulating wealth by the oppression of your fellowman? Why extort riches from the sweat of the poor and rise to honor on the backs of your neighbors? When you die you take nothing with you, and the great leveler of all ranks and distinctions humbles your pride to the dust. Know also, your mother is not dead. She lives. This little grave holds only the shell, the kernel is not here. She lives also in the good deeds she has done, in the noble thoughts and feelings she has inspired in others, and in the memory and affections of her relatives and friends."

The voice ceased speaking and a wonderful calm and quiet came over me. I turned around and, assuming that she could hear me, I said: "Oh, Mother dear, forgive your erring child his shortcomings. I was not always as I ought to have been. I have sometimes sinned against you by disregarding and disobeying your will. I have caused you lots of trouble and anxiety. But I know you have blotted out my sins from your memory, and your heart was too pure and holy to harbor a grudge against your child. To your loving and forgiving spirit I trust for mercy and forgiveness."

The sun was declining behind the near hills and I turned to find the exit from the "House of Life"

—the significant name by which the Jewish people designate a cemetery—when I noticed, a little distance away, an open grave around which stood a group of weeping children of tender age. The tears came again to my eyes and I said half-murmuringly: "Oh God of Mercy, where is thy mercy? How canst thou suffer so much misery in this world? Why this painful wrenching of hearts through death? Art Thou deaf to the cries of the widows and orphans? Why was man condemned to live in this vale of tears? Why are thy children floundering about in this restless sea of trouble pursued by overwhelming waves of misfortune and misery? What is the meaning of all the suffering in this world?"

And again I seemed to hear a voice saying:

"God is our loving Father and we must trust Him to do what is best for us. A little child cannot understand why his father will at times yield to all his wishes and at other times deny him his desires, and even inflict punishment upon him. Our Father gives us life and takes it away but it is all done in love for his children. And when the earthly life ceases the heavenly begins. Death is only a vestibule to the higher life, a homecoming of the soul, a reunion of the child with his Heavenly Father."

PEACE AT HOME

The basis and foundation of a happy home is peace and harmony between husband and wife. A home may be situated in the finest part of the city, and furnished in the most lavish style, and yet be the most wretched place to live in, if there is lacking the one thing which makes home a real home, and that is, the peaceful and harmonious living together of husband and wife. Without this, no true home life is possible, and no true happiness is obtainable.

Unfortunately there is many a home without happiness, because the angel of peace does not dwell there.

How foolish so many of our fellow-beings are!

Banishing the dove of peace from their homes and living a cat-and-dog life, they make home, which ought to be a place of heaven, a place of hell!

What is it that makes them act so foolishly and how can they be cured of their folly?

The main source of quarrels between married couples is the extreme selfishness which rules the average human being, and guides him in all his thoughts and actions. A great many people marry, not because they love each other, but because they love *themselves,* and hope that by marriage they will benefit themselves. True love marriages, the result of love and devotion for one another, are few and far between. By most people marriage is looked upon as a partnership in a business enterprise, which is entered upon only because each partner needs the help of the other and expects to do better in business with than without a partner.

Now, if a couple marries with the only object in view of bettering their own condition in life, they may not be inspired by the highest standards of life, but they can hardly be called foolish. They rather act wisely in considering their own interests and looking out for their own benefit in life. Where their foolishness comes in is that, after being married, they display so much selfishness, that their self-interest suffers and the object of their marriage is defeated. For at the bottom of all quarrels between husband and wife is the blind, unyielding love of self, which, bent upon satisfying its own desires, tramples upon the feelings of

others and destroys ruthlessly everything opposing it.

Take, for instance, the money question, the most fruitful source of all domestic unhappiness. The husband often is so liberal in gratifying his personal tastes in matters of drinking and smoking that he acts stingily when the wife wants a new dress, or the wife is so lavish in her expenditures for dresses that she allows the grocer's bills to go unpaid. In either case happiness is destroyed by the desire in finding happiness at the expense of each other.

In other cases, where the money question plays no part, it will be found that it is always selfishness carried to excess which disturbs the peace of the home. Where husband and wife are only looking out for their own individual comfort and happiness there must be discomfort and unhappiness. It is only by yielding a part of our personal desires and appetites that we can obtain the full measure of happiness to be found in married life.

Marriage is often spoken of as a partnership for life, but it is a partnership which differs in one important element from that of a commercial partnership, inasmuch as the marriage partnership is added to by the fruits of the marriage, which forms a new, unknown factor with an immense

influence upon the fate of the contracting parties.

In biblical times children were considered the greatest blessings on earth, and the more of them, the better. In our modern time we are rather inclined to think of quality than of quantity. The more so, because a modern child is hardly satisfied to be a "silent" partner, but rather plays in the household, a much more important part than was assigned to it in ancient times, especially to one of the female sex.

Now, it happens that the arrival of this new factor in the marriage partnership opens up a new source for domestic dissensions and discord. Even before the child receives its name, the parents have many a warm discussion. And who has failed to notice the harsh words that often are exchanged between husband and wife on the questions of how properly to attend to the thousand and one things touching the life of a little child?

But while such squabbles are easily adjusted and leave no bitter sting, arising as they do from the pure fountain of parental love, the peace of many a home is disturbed and darkened by the half-grown or grown up child, which often becomes the storm centre of the household, and the disturber of the peace and happiness of the home. At wedding banquets one is sure to hear a telegram

which reads: "May your greatest troubles be little ones." This ancient joke expresses, however, a very sad fact. The little members of a household are often like "the little foxes" of which the Bible says that they "spoil the vineyard." Too much anxiety for their present and future happiness makes the parents neglectful of the duty they owe to each other of filling the home with the bright rays of a glorious summerday.

But after all, the only way of establishing peace and harmony in the home, is for husband and wife to consider their relations to each other not merely as a partnership which may be dissolved at pleasure, but as a union of hearts that is bound to last and to survive even death. For it is a union which lives on in the children and children's children. A true appreciation of this solemn fact would be very helpful in driving away the threatening clouds hovering over the home and in smoothing out the rough places in the voyage of married life. The motto which inspired the fathers of this country "United we stand, divided we fall," should be inscribed on the walls of every home, and in the hearts of every husband and wife.

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

Time is eternal; it has neither beginning nor end. Man, however, having only a measured time, ought to value it highly.

Is New Year's day a day for worldly pleasures and amusements? Shall we celebrate it by eating, drinking and being merry? Not, if we seriously consider the true meaning of New Year's day.

To the thoughtful mind New Year's day has a very serious aspect. It marks a new station in life's journey, and calls for an accounting between the material and spiritual part of our nature.

New Year's day, first of all, brings home to us the sad truth that "all is vanity," all things pass away as a shadow and as a cloud in the sky. All our possessions, all our achievements are at the mercy of our relentless cruel enemy—death. Yes, wherever we turn we are facing death. When the morning breaks, the night dies; the life of the springtime proclaims winter's death, and the birth of a new year is preceded by the death of the old. Alas! There is no life without death.

This sad truth would overwhelm us and unfit us for our daily tasks, were we to keep it always before our minds. Who would care to strive and toil for something that is doomed to destruction?

What's the use of sowing, if the harvest is swallowed up by death? Why build houses and rear families if the Great Destroyer is sure to come and demolish them?

Wise nature has therefore endowed man with the faculty of forgetting his ultimate doom. She has ordained that man should live and act as if there were no death.

But while it is well for us not to indulge too much in the melancholy reflections on our mortality, it would be foolish and harmful to live altogether without giving any thought to that solemn truth. There are and ought to be moments in life when we fully realize that "all is vanity."

There can be no better time for such a realization than New Year's day. Its arrival should make us pause and take an inventory of our business in life. How do we stand? How is the balance between the earthly and heavenly side of the ledger? Are we solvent? Have we not strayed from the right path and become bankrupt in body, soul, and spirit?

The deep meaning which thus attaches to New Year's day can be, however, best brought out, if we make our birthday the real New Year's day. Of course, according to our official calendar the year 1916 will begin Saturday, while the Jewish calen-

dar placed the beginning of the year 5676 on Thursday, Sept. 8, and the calendar in Russia, behind time in this as in everything else, makes the year 1916 begin 12 days later than the rest of Europe. The Mohammedans, again, have another calendar.

But the officially recognized New Year's day is not, strictly speaking, our New Year's day as individuals. The real New Year's day for each of us is the anniversary of our birth. It is the day when we first saw the light, and it is the recurrence of that day which to every one of us is a New Year's day.

Considered in this light, the usual way of celebrating one's birthday is all wrong and contrary to the true spirit of the occasion. Birthday parties with their sumptuous dinners and merry dances are the expression of the sentiment of those who, according to the prophet of old carelessly say: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

The true sentiment which should inspire the celebration of one's birthday, the beginning of a new year, are those of solemn awe and reflection. For as we are standing on the threshold of a new year we are solemnly reminded that with the year that has passed a part of our life on this earth has passed away, and we have come nearer to "that bourne from which no traveler returned."

And what will the incoming year bring to us? We are standing before the urn of time wherein our destiny is recorded. What will our lot be? Will it be life or death; happiness or misery; riches or poverty?

In the midst of such uncertainty of fate, let me ask you: Is it wise or proper to indulge in hilarious gratifications of our lower appetites, in luxurious dinners and dances?

It certainly is not.

The wise and proper way of observing the anniversary of our birthday, our real New Year's day, it seems to me, is to devote it to solemn meditation and searchings of the heart. It is a day, which more than any other day, reminds us of our mortality. Therefore it should set us to thinking seriously of the best ways and means for improving our moral and spiritual condition, and should spur us on to greater efforts in behalf of our heavenly guest that sojourns with our mortal body, the soul of man, that came from heaven, and the earthly journey ended, will return to it.

Some of my strictly religious friends might perhaps be surprised to find that I do not mention prayer as a part of the observance of New Year's day. My reason for the omission is, because prayer has been so often misunderstood. Some religious

fanatics have an idea that by praying and shedding tears, all their sins will be forgiven and they can go on sinning again. There are some who do not feel quite certain that God cares much for the tears shed by man. If he did, why does he deprive a mother of her only child, or children of their dearly beloved mother?

Yet, they are grossly mistaken who think that this is a world ruled by blind chance, and that there is no Supreme Ruler and Governor of the Universe. Especially since the outbreak of this terrible European war, there are not a few who have been asking the question: How can a merciful God permit such awful slaughter to go on?

Now, while it is hard to give a satisfactory answer to this puzzling question, it is not so hard to see even in this great calamity which has befallen mankind the fingerprints of a Supreme Power that exacts just retribution for crimes committed.

Out of the darkness of destruction and despair in Europe, a new day of peace and liberty will dawn upon the world. The thunder and lightning will be succeeded by the still small voice in the heart of humanity, the voice which speaks of heaven on earth and good will to all men.

CHILDREN NOT SNOBS

Grownups are the natural teachers and instructors of the little ones. But it would be exceedingly beneficial for us if the role would be occasionally reversed and the little children become our teachers. How greatly, for instance, would our social intercourse be benefited if we would follow the example set by our young children. Did you ever observe how easily a child will accommodate itself to its social surroundings? When two children meet, even though for the first time, there is at once a bond of fellowship established and they will play together like old friends. And why? Because the pure mind of the child knows nothing of pride and aristocratic feeling. Every child is received with open arms, whether its parents are rich or poor, of this or that nationality. Nor do these innocent little children practise the deception used by the grownup, who often will heartily shake the hand of a supposed friend, and say, "I am so glad to see you!" while in his heart he consigns him to a place hotter than the tropics.

Moreover, little children are not vindictive and bear no malice and harbor no grudge against each other. They will, of course, at times quarrel and

fight with each other, but they soon make up and can soon be seen again at play in the most friendly and affectionate manner.

But, alas, the pure and genuine friendship of childhood days is short lived. As the child grows older he grows more and more in this respect also like his double faced and hypocritical elders. His love for his companions grows colder and more discriminating. He begins to be more particular about his playmates, refuses to play with this fellow and then with that fellow, if they happen to wear inferior dress or if their parents are of a lower station in life, and he begins to think that he was foolish ever to have associated with children of that class. In a word, he no longer feels free and easy in the society of other children unless they are just of his class, and the result is occasional solitude and loneliness.

If we inquire into the sources of the happiness of childhood we find that it has its mainspring in the ignorance of the world and its ways. As soon as the child becomes conscious of the fact that it will not do to make friends with everybody its happiness suffers. This being so, it might well be asked what advantage is there in knowing the world, since such knowledge is the cause of so much misery and distress. Would we not be better off without knowledge and understanding?

The knowledge of the world originates falsehood and causes us to be double faced, to flatter those whom we hate and despise, to say things we do not mean, to deceive others and be in turn deceived by them. Why should we then strive after such a cursed gift? It would be a thousand times better to retain the innocence of childhood and to remain ignorant of the dark and vile ways of life than to be forced to indulge in lies and flatteries so common in our social life. Yes, indeed, better, far better to turn one's back upon the whole social world and live a free and independent life, telling no lies and flattering nobody, without regard to the ridicule and hatred which society heaps upon the head of one who dares to be free. Unfortunately one man slavishly apes the other, so that it is almost impossible to find a true hearted, outspoken man, because society will not tolerate such a one.

When, oh when will human reason and understanding no longer be a hindrance and a stumbling block to man's happiness and liberty? Let us hope and work for a state of society where pride of ancestry or wealth will be banished, when the art of true living will be generally known and practised, when there will be no falsehoods and deceits, but when the ways of innocent and confiding childhood will be followed and faithfully kept by all men and women, and the true brotherhood of man will be firmly established on earth.

MY DREAM.

."The true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it. In the groves of Eden he walks familiar as in his native paths. He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated. He treads the burning marl without dismay; he wins his fights without self-loss through realms 'of chaos and old night.'"

—Lamb, Last Essays of Elia.

I dreamt a dream and methinks that I am wandering through a beautiful garden, full of luxuriant growth, mighty trees rearing heavenward, perfumed flowers, singing brooks, twittering birds and a golden sunshine suffusing all and it seemed as if all nature were attuned to God.

This garden is surely the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve dwelt, ere God sent them forth from the Garden.

With wondering eyes and gladsome heart I viewed all and on and on I walked until there met my gaze a mass of people marching onward. Arm linked in arm and hand grasping hand they marched. Their eyes sparkled and their faces were aglow with a holy enthusiasm. They called unto me and bade me enter their ranks. And I willingly followed them for it was brother calling to brother.

And on we marched and onward we went until we reached the banks of a great river where lay anchored mighty battleships, destructive men of war ready to deal out death and devastation.

And they entered boats which carried them to these engines of war and seizing axes and crowbars they made useless the cannons and the guns so that death should no longer lurk in them.

Turrets and conning towers, powder and shell fell before them and the dawn of a new era began.

It was as if the words of Isaiah, the great Prophet, had come true: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn any more war."

In wonderment and astonishment I looked on and finally I asked: "What people are you, what nation do you belong to?" And the answer was: "There is no nation; we are all one." Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? I enquired no more.

They returned to the shore and again forming in lines they marched on until they reached an open space where stood a magnificent Temple. The golden doors stood wide open, bidding all to enter and across its portals was inscribed in flaming letters: "My House shall be called the House of Prayer for all Nations."

With youthful steps the masses entered and forming one mighty band of brotherhood they sang to the Father of All.

And "the Lord dwells in Heaven and is glad."

It seemed to me as if God descended from his High Place and came down into the midst of this people. A great light flooded the Temple and God dwelt among man on the day he became a true man.

I awoke and behold it was but a dream. But dreams come true and visions are realized and so I ask myself: "Will the day ever come when force and strife and war and struggle for selfishness will be no more; when no man will have reason to say: "I have shot mine arrow o'er the house, and hurt my brother?"

A dream and yet to be realized if we would but remember:

"O dream not, midst this worldly strife,
An idle art the poet brings:
Let high Philosophy control
And sages calm the stream of life,
'Tis he refines its fountain springs,
The nobler passions of the soul."

THE MARVELOUS FOUNTAIN.

"The heart like God is a Unity."

The human heart—how immeasurable are its ways, and how vain all efforts to sound its depths! Mount McKinley has been measured, the bottom of the ocean has been sounded, but the human heart defies all mathematical calculations. The most open-hearted man has some dark recesses in his heart which no eyes of another human being ever sees, and which he himself is unable thoroughly to explore. For not only can we ever fully know what is going on in the heart of our fellow beings, we do not understand even our own heart and are often moved to act in a way which surprises ourselves.

Who can fathom the depth of a mother's love for the child, or a patriot's love for his country? Who can measure the amount of evil passions in the heart which result in lying, theft and murder? Rockefeller and other philanthropists are establishing institutes for scientific research into special diseases of the body. But there is no scientific research of the heart possible. And why? Because the heart of man cannot be put on the laboratory table, its secret springs cannot be uncovered, its mode of action cannot be laid bare. How varied are the contents of that wonderful fountain! Love

and hatred, honey and poison, joy and sorrow, smiles and tears, hope and despair, are all denizens of the human heart and intermingle with each other. God alone, the searcher of all hearts, knows the secret springs of that wonderful fountain—the human heart.

FANATICISM DISAPPEARS TOGETHER WITH CONFIDENCE BETWEEN MAN AND MAN.

"By education a person is exalted to a god; by education he is converted to a devil; by education he is degraded to a brute."

—*Savage.*

The more educated mankind becomes, the more enlightened it grows, and the more fanaticism and idolatry are disappearing and the belief in God grows more and more beautiful and idealistic. The floods of light streaming into the world dispel the clouds of dark superstition, and fanaticism is growing weaker and weaker every day.

At the present time there is hardly any civilized country in the world where the inhabitants bow down to stone images.

But with the disappearance of idolatry there disappears also the mutual confidence among men. In former times a man could easily know who is his enemy, because people were not so adept in the art of pretending and masquerading practiced nowadays. The unpolished and uncouth manners left no doubt about who is a friend or an enemy. But to-day there are schools organized for the very

purpose of teaching how to simulate, and one must be very clever and a good psychologist to discover the meanness and falsehood which is behind the sweet words and polished manners.

While it certainly is a blessing to humanity that the light of education drives out the black clouds of fanaticism and idolatry, it is much to be deplored that under the mask of civilized and refined manners there is hidden so much of falsehood and corruption. For woe is to the man who loses his faith and confidence in his fellowbeings!

"THE CLOUDLESS SUMMER SUN."

"How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world."
—Shakespeare.

The meeting with a good man is to me as the breaking of the sun through the dense forest, showing the pathway to the erring wanderer.

When I look at the raging sea of life in which man tosses up and down as the angry waves of the stormy ocean, every man, impelled by his own selfishness, thinking but of himself.

When I behold man, urged by his egoism to commit any deed no matter how small, how petty that it may cause harm and injury to his fellow-man my belief in humanity is shattered and I see but before me charlatans and fakers and it seems to me as if the world were full of wickedness.

My faith in humanity and the goodness of man is destroyed.

When I behold the almighty dollar turning pulsating hearts into steel when called upon to be helpful.

When I see how few people think of anything nobler, anything higher and more ideal, failing to strive after the good in life, sadness overtakes me and I ask myself: "Where am I? Among whom am I?"

And the answer, the only answer comes: "Among men who are wild, begrudging each other's life, seeking each other's destruction."

I grow pessimistic, the iron enters my soul and I am filled with unspeakable hatred toward the whole of mankind.

But just as the sun comes as a savior to the despairing wanderer in the dark, dismal forest, so my hatred, my dismay, my wretchedness disappears when I meet a good man. And there comes to me the thought of Burns, who sang so beautifully:

"What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning."

SUICIDE.

Why it is more frequent among the rich than among the poor.

The records show that the suicide rate among the rich is higher than among the poor. How shall we account for this curious social phenomenon?

My answer is that it is the all powerful force of habit, which, ruling, as it does, the minds of all men, produces also the observed difference in the suicide rate between the rich and the poor.

You may have heard of the fortune teller who said to the visitor: "I see from the lines of your palm that there are before you two years of poverty and distress." "And after that," came the anxious inquiry, "what will be my lot?" "After the two years of poverty," she answered solemnly, "your misery will have ended. You'll be used to it." Having got used to his poverty the poor man is by no means as miserable as those imagine him to be who have never been poor themselves. Even as early as the time of the Talmud they had a proverb: "A poor man is as good as dead." But it's a matter of fact that he does not feel his condition so keenly, because he gets used to it. He is an optimist by experience and habit, and his patience and long suffering never desert him. He laughs at fate and

dares it to do its worst, but he shrinks from taking fate in his own hand.

Different is the case with the rich man. His habits all tend to make him impatient of any interference with his will or plans. He is used to having his own way everywhere. Small wonder that he gets rattled and upset when suddenly a situation arises which reveals his weakness or threatens him with ruin and poverty. Having failed to learn the lesson of patient endurance amid suffering, he yields to the insane impulse of self-destruction.

A proof of the correctness of my explanation is the fact that in almost every instance of the suicide of a rich man or woman, the victim is one who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. A man who by his own energy amasses a fortune is not the kind of man who will commit suicide. Such a man is used to hard knocks and can stand some batterings of fate. But the man who was born in wealthy surroundings and has never known what it means to work for a living is the one who is apt to fall a victim to despair.

MAN AND THE WATCH.

If the dog is spoken of as "the faithful friend of man," a watch may be called so with no less appropriateness. For is not the watch the bosom-friend of man, especially when worn after the ladies' fashion? We cannot get along without the watch. It is our constant companion through life, and we take it along and consult it on all occasions. We often look into the face and feel the pulse of our friend. If its pulse has stopped we are a little frightened, as if we were reminded of the fate that will be ours some day.

So used has man become to this friend that he regulates his whole life by his dictates. If he wakes up in the morning the first thing he does is to consult his watch. Sometimes it assures him that "all is well" and the day is still young. At other times it commands him to be up and doing, for life is short. When the doctor approaches a sick-bed the first thing he does is to consult his watch to compare its ticking with the beating of the heart. And how very similar are the two! Tick-tack tick-tack, goes the heart and the watch. The tick is put to death by the tack, which in turn is swallowed up by the next tick.

In the course of time the tick-tacks of the watch are becoming irregular and finally cease altogether. Then we part company with the watch, however

faithful it may have served us for years. It is no longer useful to us and we care no longer for it. How very human-like this last fate of the watch turns out to be! When a human being fails to tick-tack he is also pushed aside and relegated to the junk-heap made up of old and decrepit humanity.

TO MY CRITICS.

The higher a stone is thrown into the air the deeper it will sink into the ground when it falls. Barking at others is a poor way of displaying one's vocal powers, and throwing mud at other people does not make one clean.

There is a good and a bad way of criticising our fellow-beings. If criticism is intended to point out the weak spots and to show wherein improvements can be made, then it is just and beneficial. But there is a great deal of criticism that has no such high motives; it is born of envy and malice; it seeks to tear down, not to build up, to hinder, not to help.

Such a low and mean kind of criticism I have experienced in the past few years. I was told, for instance, that I had no right to write philosophy because I have never studied philosophy in any college or university. This criticism is, of course, unjustified, for some of the greatest philosophers of the world have been men who never received a diploma as Doctor of Philosophy, and have never attended any school for higher education.

Some time ago I was asked by a man who thinks he knows a great deal, why I took the trouble to publish a book, there being already so many books

in the world. This question is just as foolish as it would be to ask a man why he got married, since there are already so many millions of people in this world. But the man who wants to get married is not kept back by the fact that the country is already well populated. He is bound to satisfy his own desires and inclinations. And so when I am writing, I am simply following the demands of my nature which urges me on to communicate my thoughts to my fellows.

I must confess, though, that had I found that nobody cares to read what I am writing, I would have stopped short and thrown away my pen. But I was fortunate enough to be encouraged to write by the fact that men in all walks of life, professors in colleges, lawyers, and editors of papers and magazines have written to me letters which show that I have been able to interest them in my writings, although I am not the proud possessor of a "Doctor" title.

This big world of ours is like the little busy bee. It has its honey and its sting. For the sting of ungenerous and foolish critics I am amply compensated by the honey of generous and wise men who encouraged me in my humble efforts to express my thoughts in writing.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW.

The most ancient jokes are those concerning the mother-in-law. Adam was probably the only man who never heard of one of that kind. I say probably, because, for all we know, his sons-in-law might have cracked jokes about Mother Eve. And yet the mother-in-law is by no means a joke. She is often a serious menace to the peace and happiness of a young married couple and many a home has been wrecked by her presence. The only way to counteract her evil influence is, in my opinion, that prescribed in the good old Book, which tells us: "Therefore doth a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife (Genesis ii. 24)."

Does the Bible approve of neglecting one's parents? Not at all. It means simply this: If a meddling mother is nagging her son about his wife in whom she finds nothing to commend and everything to condemn, the son should rise in his manhood and "cleave unto his wife." The best mother-in-law is an absent mother-in-law. Occasional visits are all right, but they must be visits, not visitations.

APHORISMS.

Young man, take a lesson from the tree. While the tree is young, it strikes its roots deep in the soil so as to be able to draw life and sustenance in the years to come. He that wastes his time and talents in youth grows prematurely old and stores up for himself nothing but sorrow and trouble.

The world appears sometimes to be like an insane asylum the inmates of which believe themselves to be the doctors who are sent there to cure the others.

A wise mother is not satisfied with teaching her child how to talk, but she will also teach him how to keep silent.

FRIENDSHIP AND ENMITY.

A friendly disposition makes friends.

When a man's fortune declines he loses his friends, but his enemies remain.

If we were as ready to find excuses for the faults of others as we are for our own faults, we would surely have more friends and fewer enemies.

No wonder that a man has more enemies than friends. To make friends costs money, while an enemy we can get for nothing.

We may be in doubt about having friends, but we are pretty sure to have enemies.

When on concluding a visit to a friend we are thanked for having come, the real feeling of thankfulness is often inspired by our leaving.

CONCERNING TRUTH.

"Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few."

—*Berkeley.*

King David has said: "Truth will grow out of the earth," but as yet Truth is deeply buried in the bowels of the earth.

Truth in the mouth of a fool is sometimes as dangerous as a revolver in the hand of a child.

Woe unto him who fears Truth's revelations concerning himself.

The fear of telling the truth is strongest in him who is afraid of others telling the truth about him.

The biggest liar wants the truth—from some one else.

THE MIRROR.

If a looking glass could be made to reflect the moral as well as the physical features, how awful a sight humanity would present when a mirror is held up against it!

The skilful flatterer arranges his mirrors in such a way that his victim gets a telescopic view of faults and a microscopic view of his virtues.

A father punishing his child for inherited moral defects is like the fool who gets angry with the mirror because it reveals to him his own ugliness.

Sudden success as well as sudden failure is like the mirrors used in clothing stores—it brings out into view all the sides of a man's character.

The mirror teaches us a striking lesson. To show our neighbor his shortcomings, but not to make him appear grotesque.

CONCERNING THE HEART.

To make the world better, we need not so much better brains as better hearts.

If man of great brains would have also great hearts they would not have invented such murderous machines of war to spill human blood all over the earth.

Despite thousands of friends the heart remains solitary and lonely.

The gatherng of dark clouds around the heart is usually followed by a rain of tears.

However much people who love each other may be united by caresses and kisses, they are still divided by the secrets of the hearts which each one keeps to himself.

To every man the heart is his castle, his holy of holies, where no outsider has any right to enter. It is therefore both foolish and ill-mannered to try

to get too near to the sacred secrets of the heart of our fellow-man. Still more foolishly do we act if we disclose our inner heart to others, even to the one we love most.

Could we look into the hearts of our friends, our eyes would often be dimmed with sorrow and pain.

CONCERNING FOOLS.

If nature destines a man to be a fool, she is merciful to him by concealing from him his destiny.

A fool may be fooled by other people, a wise man only by himself.

Beware lest he that you look upon as a fool, fool you.

In times past a fool was one who believed all things; at the present time a fool is he who denies everything.

Isn't it strange that we recognize our follies only after our friends have long forgotten them?

If the fool's share of wisdom, were as large as the wise man's share of foolishness, there would be few fools left.

LIGHT AND SHADOW.

A tree is sometimes valued for its shade, but man is valued only for the light he gives. When the tree dies its shade dies with it; but when man dies his light continues to shine.

The shadow is not to be attributed to the light. It rather comes from the lack of light.

The light emphasizes and accentuates the shadow.

While the sun is shining the shadows appear. But some people can see nothing but the shadows, as if the sun were not shining at all.

Many a man obscures the passage of light and cries all the time that the world is dark.

The earthly shadows pass away, but the heavenly light shines on forever.

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